

Harry Lucacher:
A Life Dedicated to the Boys of the
Hebrew National Orphan Home



Edited and Compiled By
Howard Dolgin

September 2024 Edition

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Preface

Howard Dolgin is the grandson of Harry Lucacher.

For the past twenty years, Howard Dolgin has invested countless hours of research delving into various newspapers, archives, personal interviews, and books to learn more about the boys at the Hebrew National Orphan Home and the incredible people who made this fine establishment.

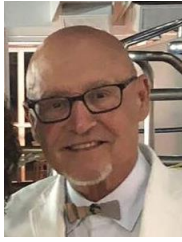
This includes Harry Lucacher, whose transformative leadership and tenacity kept the HNOH running through the Great Depression and other challenges – without the support of the government or the backing of philanthropic giants. Under his watchful eye, the 400 boys of the HNOH not only received nourishment, top-notch medical care, and a quality education – they found a surrogate family that provided comraderie and wonderful experiences, while preparing them for the complexities of the real world.

This book is the culmination of Howard Dolgin's determination to honor Harry Lucacher's life, effort, and dedication to the boys of the Hebrew National Orphan Home. Along the way, he assembled an outstanding team of research, computer, and writing professionals.



Howard Dolgin, Editor

Acknowledgments



Avrum Geller



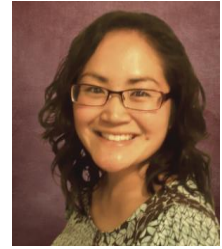
Yoav Zohar



Paul Campbell-Trimbur



Meryl Schumacker



Vickie Ito

Avrum Geller

This book would not exist without Avrum Geller's ten years of tireless genealogical research. Avrum searched for Harry Lucacher's family history data and made the insightful inferences which wove the data into this story.

Yoav Zohar

Thanks to Yoav Zohar of Y2Z LLC, whose tireless efforts, infinite patience, and computer expertise made the vision of a website into a reality (yoavzoharmac.com).

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Thanks to Paul Campbell-Trimbur, whose expert genealogical research enhanced this book.

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Thanks to Meryl Schumacker of We Go Way Back LLC, whose genealogical skills and outstanding narrative writing skills made the story flow from beginning to end (waybackgen.com/genealogist).

Vickie Ito

Thanks to Vickie Ito, a dear friend, for lending her research, editing, and writing expertise to help move this project forward.

PART I: Beginnings

Introduction

Harry Lucacher spent his life working tirelessly for the well-being of the boys in the Hebrew National Orphan Home (HNOH).

Harry served the Hebrew National Orphan Home for over a quarter century, as a fund raiser, the Business Manager, and as the Superintendent in charge of daily operations. His dedication provided hundreds of Jewish orphans with care, shelter, food, medical care, clothing, education, recreation, and religious instruction. Harry left a lasting impression on the boys in his care. Their memories of Harry paint a remarkable picture. When Harry died, “His Boys” composed poems, planted trees, and created the Harry Lucacher Alumni Society. Harry’s boys made real changes to their lives because of Harry’s care and positive influence. A thousand mourners attended his funeral. Although more than eighty years have passed since his decease, the story of Harry’s life continues to inspire.



HNOH alumnus Sam George Arcus drawing a portrait of Harry Lucacher in 1939. Image source: H.L.A.S.

Genealogical Summary

Hershel “Harry” Lucacher was reportedly born in mid-May 1883ⁱ in Bessarabia, (a region that is now part of Moldova) to parents Josef Lucacher and Chana Goldenberg.ⁱⁱ He died on 23 March 1938 in Yonkers, Westchester County, New York, at the age of 54.ⁱⁱⁱ He was buried the following day at Mount Hebron Cemetery in Flushing, Queens, New York.^{iv} He married Chaia “Ida” Gottlieb, daughter of Aron Gottlieb and Sheine Malke Krawitz, on 13 August 1906 in the borough of Manhattan, New York City.^v Ida was reportedly born 27 May 1887,^{vi} although records throughout her life suggest that she may have been born one or more years earlier.^{vii} Ida Gottlieb’s May 27, 1887 birthday was made up and given to her by her daughters Sylvia Lucacher Dolgin and Emma Lucacher Shapiro. The Gottliebs hailed from Pumpenai, then located in Panevezys in the province of Kovno, Russia.^{viii} Today, Pumpenai is in Lithuania. Ida died on 21 October 1977 and was buried at Mount Hebron Cemetery.

Hershel “Harry” Lucacher: Harry’s Family: Lucacher, Goldenberg, Rabinowitz and Sultan

Although there are conflicting dates of birth for Hershel “Harry” Lucacher, Harry Lucacher was probably born in mid-May 1883 in Bessarabia, to parents Josef Lucacher and Chana Goldenberg. Josef appears to have died by 1887 give or take, as Chana married Berl Rabinowitz at about that time (based on the date of birth of Rose Rabinowitz, their first child together).^{ix} Harry had at least three younger half-sisters, Rose Rabinowitz Sultan [Soltanowitz],^x Tsilah [Celia] Rabinowitz Kreposter,^{xi} and Chava Rabinowitz Chait,^{xii} and two half-brothers Samuel Robbins [Schapchse Rabinowitz] and Isidor Robbins [Isak Rabinowitz].

Bessarabia, Moldova, Cahul, Lokachi

Bessarabia is a historic region that is now mostly in modern-day [Moldova](#), although some of Bessarabia is in Ukraine and some in Romania. The name

Bessarabia derives from the [Basarab dynasty](#), which allegedly ruled over the area in the 14th century.

Harry's family comes from Cahul, a district and a city in southern Moldova (Bessarabia). The name Cahul was given to the area after the [Battle of Kagul](#), which was fought nearby in the Russo-Turkish War, 1768-1774. Today Bessarabia is part of the independent country of Moldova. The capital of Moldova is Chisinau. It was previously called Kishinev.

Harry's surname "Lucacher" points to possible origins of his paternal line. In the late 18th to early 19th centuries, Jews in Eastern Europe were required to adopt surnames. Jewish surnames were derived from a range of sources, from occupations and physical traits to topography and place names. Harry's surname "Lucacher" might be derived from the name *Lokachi*, a small village in Ukraine.^{xiii} Surnames based on places, like Lucacher, rarely corresponded to a family's residence at the time they adopted the surname. Rather, they corresponded to families' residences one or more generations prior. The surname Lucacher suggests that Harry's paternal ancestors might have resided in Lokachi at one time.

Lokachi is 371 miles NNW of Cahul. This location of origin and eventual resettlement corresponds with the typical pattern of Jewish internal migration in Eastern Europe, as the "wandering Jews," who had settled in Western Europe during the diaspora, consistently migrated (or were forced) in an easterly direction across Europe, and into what became known as the "Pale of Settlement," and within the Pale of Settlement moved south along river routes toward new agricultural settlements.

Lokachi had a well-established Jewish population:

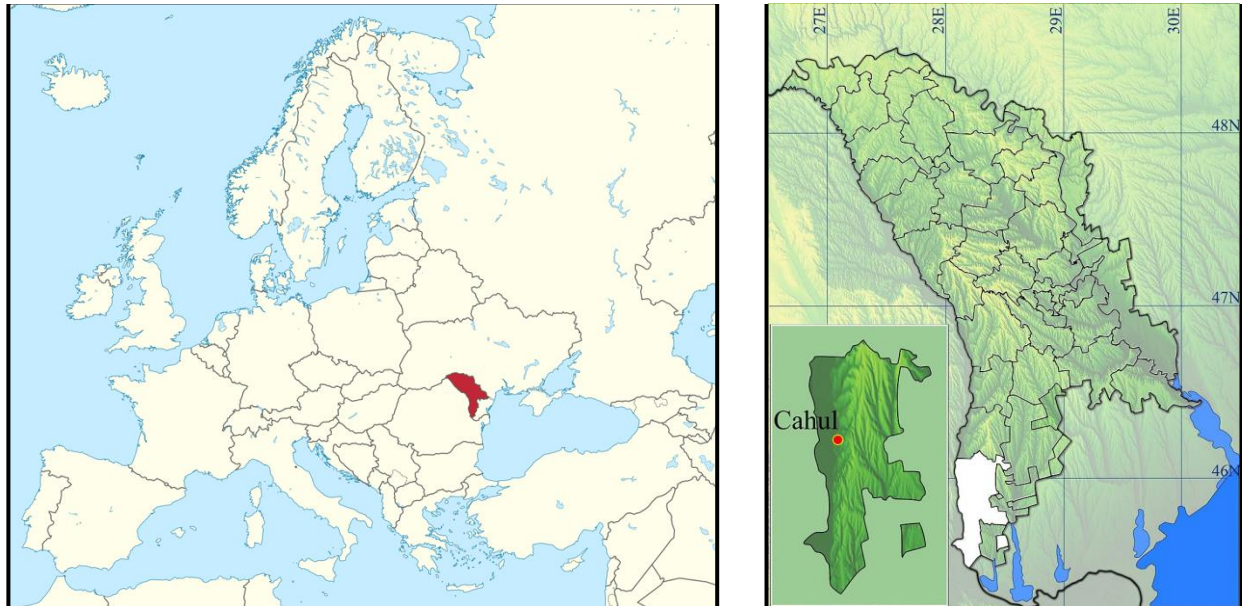
Jews are first recorded [*in Lokachi*] in 1569. In 1648-49, they fled during the Chmielnicki massacres and subsequently enjoyed favorable economic conditions. Dov Baer, the *Maggid* of Mezhirech, was born there c. 1704 and in the 19th cent. Olyka, Turzysk (Trisk), and Ruzhin Hasidism were represented in the community.^{xiv}



Lokachi, located in the northwestern corner of Ukraine near Poland, is about 371 miles from Cabul, Moldova. Image source: Google Maps.

By the 19th century, Harry's paternal ancestors may have made their way to Bessarabia, where they encountered Harry's maternal ancestors, the Goldenbergs. The surname "Goldenberg" is Yiddish for "gold mountain." Such chosen surnames generally did not refer to specific places (i.e., a particular mountain), rather they were aspirational; fortunately, other clues suggest where the Goldenbergs resided.

Although Harry's exact birthplace is unconfirmed, his half-siblings^{xv} and maternal uncles were reportedly born in the city of Kagul (KA-hull), in Bessarabia guberniya (province) of the Russian Empire [or, located in Romania during certain periods, both earlier and later]. Harry's mother also lived there in later life.^{xvi} Today, the town, now known as Cahul, is both a city and district in Moldova, close to the Romanian border. Harry was born in that area as well, although we do not have documentation of his specific town of birth.



At left, a map of Europe showing Moldova in red. At right, the location of Cahul city and district in present-day Moldova. Images by Wikimedia, NASA/user Asybaris01, CC licenses.

Cahul's climate has been classified in what is known in the Köppen classification as Marine West Coast, therefore similar to the range of U.S. coastal climates from Sacramento to Seattle, with few extremes of temperature and ample precipitation in all months. The area is home to Moldova's largest lakes, as well as many ponds, meadows, and deciduous trees.

From 1812, Cahul was located in the Russian Empire in the province of Bessarabia. Bessarabia was home to a large Jewish community:

During the nineteenth century, the Jewish population of Bessarabia increased greatly; by the end of that century, it reached 230,000 people, representing 12 percent of the population of Bessarabia. In many of the towns, Jews made up 50 percent of the population. As merchants, craftsmen, traders, workers, and farmers, the Jews contributed substantially to the economic development of the area. Mutual influence and cooperation with other peoples characterized the spiritual life of the Bessarabian Jews.^{xvii}



Harry's ancestors may have recognized this view of Lacul Manta, the largest natural lake in Moldova. It is located about four miles south of the center of Cahul. Photograph by Alex Prodan, CC license.

Anti-Semitism and Pogroms in Bessarabia

Bessarabia's thriving Jewish community was not immune to anti-Semitism and pogroms. Pogroms were violent riots in which Jewish homes, synagogues, and shops were destroyed. Jews were beaten, raped, and killed. Pogroms were usually orchestrated or encouraged by the Catholic or Orthodox clergy, the local police force, and the Czarist government.

In January 1872, a man desecrated a church in Izmail, about 60 miles southeast of Cahul.^{xviii} Once caught, the man—a former Jew who had converted to Christianity—alleged that he was Jewish and committed the crime upon orders from local Jewish community leaders.

In response, a pogrom erupted in Izmail. The violence spread as far as Cahul. Jews in Izmail were arrested and tortured, including a rabbi. The instigators of the violence were later tried and acquitted; however, several Jews were convicted of looting. The verdict was so grossly unjust, it was condemned by nations across the world. Harry's ancestors in Cahul may have witnessed or been victims of the 1872 pogrom. They certainly would have witnessed acts of violence and experienced discrimination as Jews in that part of the world.

Members of the Lucacher and Goldenberg families began their immigration to America in the early 1890s and the immigration from Bessarabia increased at the turn-of-the-century. The infamous Kishinev pogrom (or massacre) took place from 6-9 April 1903 in Bessarabia's capital city of Kishinev (which was later renamed as Chisinau). During this time, 49 Jews were killed, Jewish women were raped, and an estimated 1,500 homes were damaged. Then, a second Kishinev (Chisinau) pogrom on 19-20 September 1905 led to 19 Jewish deaths and 56 other serious Jewish casualties.

The pogroms in Kishinev and elsewhere in Bessarabia led to accelerated immigration to America in the early 20th century, increased by economic hardship as the region became depopulated. The Kishinev pogroms are said to have been the most powerful influence on Theodore Herzl leading to his creation of the Zionist movement, and through Zionism, ultimately to change world history with the recreation of the State of Israel.

Chisinau (formerly Kishinev) is the current capital of Moldova. Cahul is about 110 miles from Chisinau. When Harry came to New York City he joined the Kishinever Sick and Benevolent Society, showing his affiliation with Jews from Kishinev. They were his "landsmen," fellow Jews who came from the same Eastern European district or town.

Discrimination and pogroms inspired many other Jews to seek their fortunes in America. Promises of steady employment and religious freedom drew Jewish families across the Atlantic to New York City. Around 1897, Harry joined the tide and made his way to America.

Harry's Journey and Arrival in the US

Harry, in his Petition for Naturalization dated 1906, stated that he immigrated to New York City in January 1897^{xix}, although passenger manifests from that month do not include any H. Lucacher or a person with a similar name. The 1900 census for Tampa records him as an 18-year-old named Henry Lucacher. Harry would have set off for a port city in Europe, such as Hamburg, Bremen or Liverpool.

Although Harry Lucacher's ship manifest cannot be definitively identified, there is a manifest under the name Hersch Rabinowicz, age 15, arriving in New York City on the SS Weimar from Bremen on 17 July 1896, within 6 months of the date stated as his arrival in his naturalization petition. It is possible that he traveled with papers under the Rabinowicz [Rabinowitz] name of his step-father and resumed his true surname after arrival.

Adam Katz' (Harry's Uncle) Journey

Harry's maternal uncle, Adam Katz, more clearly identified his own arrival a few years earlier. Adam Katz stated on his naturalization papers that he arrived on the SS Augusta Victoria from Hamburg to New York City in October 1891. There is an extant manifest of the SS Augusta Victoria arriving 12 October 1891 in New York from Hamburg, Germany via Southampton, England. Although Adam Katz does not appear on that manifest, there are a sufficient number of torn or mutilated pages that it is plausible that Adam Katz was indeed onboard.

By the 1890s, with huge numbers of immigrants from Eastern Europe, competition for passengers had dramatically transformed the immigrant experience from the onerous and dangerous ordeal of yore to a safe, relatively fast, and inexpensive trip. The SS Augusta Victoria on her first voyage in 1889 crossed the Atlantic in only 7 days. It was the first of many luxury liners from Hamburg, and Bremen, Germany carrying not only luxury passengers, but hordes in dormitory-like steerage accommodations, below

deck. Competition for millions of immigrant tickets led to rapidly improving conditions and lower prices.

To get to the ship, Adam Katz would have traveled by train. Before 1890, major railroad trunk lines from both Iasi, Romania and Kishinev to Czernowitz (with its grand and imposing train station) went on to Vienna and other European cities and on to the German ports on the Baltic. Adam Katz (and later Harry Lucacher) would have purchased his ticket of passage from a ticket agent in the nearest major town. This comprehensive ticket provided all transportation, accommodations, and basic meals from there by train to a major Baltic port for the Atlantic crossing.

Hamburg-American lines offered either direct or indirect passage. A direct passage was on a ship from Hamburg via Southampton to New York. An indirect passage was from Hamburg to a port on the River Hull in northeastern England where passengers were dispatched by train to Liverpool for a steamship to America.

Steerage passage was the least expensive (ergo only) choice for most Jewish immigrants like Harry. Shipping lines competed for a share of steerage business by providing increasingly better basic food and accommodations in steerage. Of course, there was always greater risk of disease spreading in close quarters. Beyond health, illnesses posed another kind of risk: sick passengers were held at Castle Garden, or Ellis Island, and those found to have chronic disease, physical or mental defect were deported back to their port of origin.

Harry's New Beginning in America

Harry reached America as an adolescent and immediately began to create a life for himself. Harry's early years in the United States are not clear. On the 1900 Federal Census, we can see that Harry had made his way to Ybor City area of Tampa, Florida^{xx}, where, as an 18 year old, Harry lived in a boarding house with his uncle, Adam Katz and two other men. Uncle Adam and the other men were unmarried and over thirty years old.

Harry gained employment as a clerk, possibly in a hotel^{xxi}, or perhaps in his uncle Adam Katz 'dry goods and clothing store, Adam Katz and Company, which Adam opened in 1899. Sylvia Lucacher Dolgin, Harry's daughter often said that Harry worked as a clerk in a hotel while he lived in Tampa.

The only hotel in Tampa in the late 1890s and early 1900s was Henry B. Plant's Tampa Bay Hotel. It is possible that Harry worked there as a clerk. The luxurious Tampa Bay Hotel was built between 1888 and 1891 in the Moorish Revival style and had 511 elegant rooms. The hotel itself covered six acres and was a quarter of mile long. The grounds spanned 150 acres.



Tampa Bay Hotel

Most likely Harry lived on Seventh Avenue with Adam Katz and his new wife Regina Gottesman. A trolley ran from Seventh Avenue to the Tampa Bay Hotel crossing over the Hillsborough River, making it possible for Harry to commute to the hotel. Sylvia Lucacher Dolgin also said that the owner of the hotel encouraged Harry to invest in the hotel. Howard Dolgin, Harry's grandson, visited the Tampa Bay Hotel, which is now a museum on the campus of the University of Tampa. He interviewed the curator of the

museum about the likelihood that Harry worked there. The curator said that there are no existing records of the employees who worked at the hotel.

During the Spanish American War, April 1898 to August 1898, the Tampa Bay Hotel served as the command center for the American forces. The hotel was “filled to the rafters” so there must have been many employment opportunities for clerks.

Henry Plant died in 1899. Business declined and in 1905, the hotel was sold to the city of Tampa. The Federal Census has Harry living in Tampa and working as a clerk in 1900. The New York Census, Harry’s marriage certificate and Harry’s Naturalization papers have Harry living in New York City by 1906. It is quite possible that Harry worked in the Tampa Bay Hotel while business was booming and left Tampa for New York City when business tailed off.

While in Tampa, Harry probably lived at the residence of Adam Katz, 1430 1/2 Seventh Avenue.^{xxii} Adam Katz, Harry’s uncle, had married Regina Gottesman in 1902. Adam became a prosperous local businessman who also rented rooms,^{xxiii} which would suggest that Harry’s choice of housing was one of both convenience and familial connection.

Adam was the brother of Harry’s mother, Chana [Anna] (née Goldenberg). In Adam’s will, he called Harry’s mother his sister, and identified Harry’s living maternal aunts and uncles as his siblings.^{xxiv} When Adam married, he reported that his parents’ names were Isaac Katz and Yenta Goldenberg.^{xxv}

Although several of Harry’s other maternal aunts and uncles^{xxvi} gave transposed surnames—Isaac Goldenberg and Yenta or Yetta Cohen the discrepancy is not significant. Jewish immigrant siblings frequently adopted different surnames in America; possibly Adam preferred his mother’s maiden name “Katz” (Katz is an acronym of “Kohen Tsedek”: Cohen Priest) while his siblings preferred their paternal surname “Goldenberg.” Perhaps to avoid confusion in America, Adam reported that his father was a Katz and his mother was a Goldenberg, rather than the reverse.

Also, Russian internal passports for Jewish women and children often were issued under the maternal maiden surname and many immigrants carried that name with them upon arrival in America. Harry was clearly Adam Katz' nephew, and Harry's stay at Adam's home was almost certainly pre-planned and with some expectation that the older and well-established Adam Katz would take young Harry under his wing.

Harry could not have chosen a more effective guardian than Adam Katz while he adjusted to American life. Adam was only about ten or so years older than Harry, being born on 25 May 1871 or 1872 in Cahul.^{xxvii} According to historical accounts, discriminatory laws against Jews and dangerous pogroms in the old country convinced Adam to make a life elsewhere.^{xxviii}

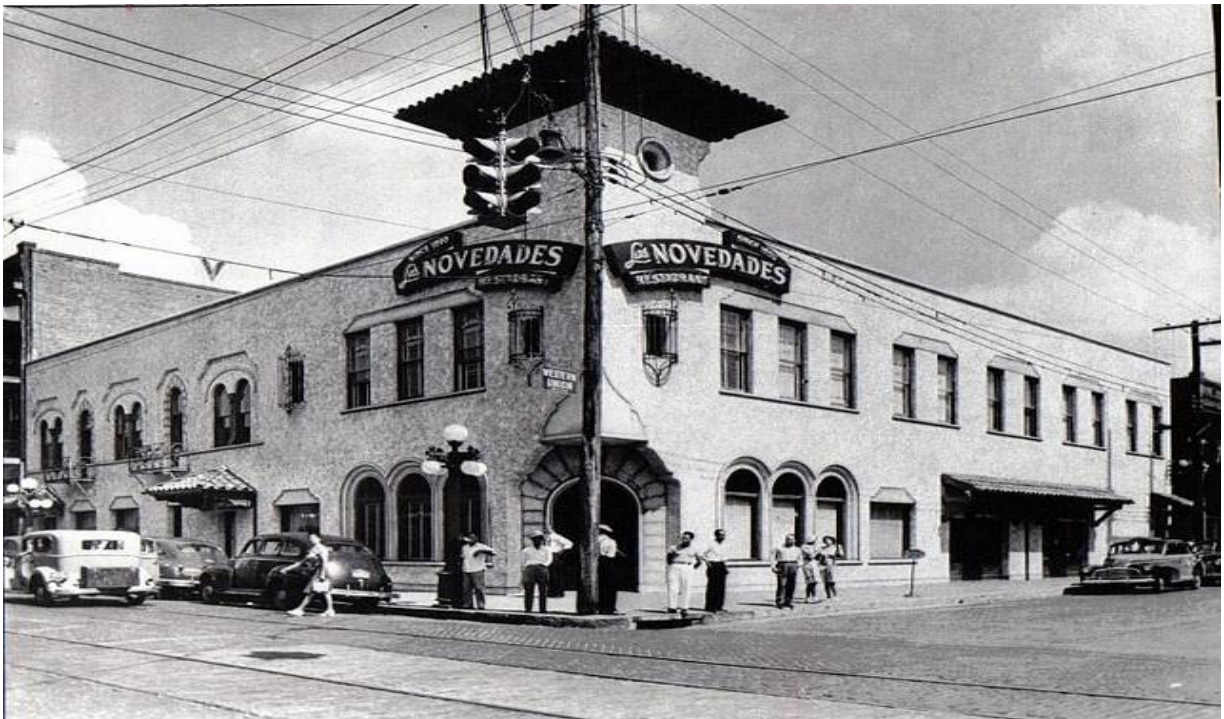
He immigrated to New York City in 1891 as a young man.^{xxix} But after a short time, he ventured south and settled in Tampa, Florida, a boom-town that had gained a reputation among Bessarabian immigrants.^{xxx} And no doubt the warm year-round climate held a certain appeal.

Tampa's thriving Ybor City neighborhood was an ideal location for a young Jewish man from Romania like Adam Katz. The area was extremely diverse and had a large Jewish community. Spanish was the primary language, which had multiple benefits:

“Spanish, like Romanian, was a part of the Romance language family. It is conceivable that because Romanian shared ‘qualities of tone, inflection, and emotional context’ that are similar to Spanish, Romanian Jews had an easier time learning Spanish than those who spoke the other languages of Jewish Ybor, e.g., Yiddish, and Russian.”

Being a Spanish speaker in Ybor City came with professional benefits as well. It was seen as a sign of respect to the area's Spanish-speaking immigrants who then patronized Jewish businesses. Accounts of Adam's success, state that he mastered Spanish first and English second, a decision that appears to have served him well.^{xxxi}

Indeed, Adam quickly made a name for himself. After several years of hard work, he established the largest dry goods/department store in Ybor City.^{xxxii} He soon expanded into banking and served as the vice president and later president of the Bank of Ybor City.^{xxxiii} Adam was clearly a gifted businessman who garnered great respect from his community. A lengthy profile in Tampa's local newspaper in 1919 described his journey to prosperity in almost mythical terms (*in full, below*):



Adam Katz and Company was located in this building at 1430 Seventh Avenue, Ybor City, Tampa, Florida. Mr. Katz added iron balconies and curved windows to give the building a more Cuban appearance.

Adam Katz, Successful Roumanian-American

Faith-led, a young Hebrew came out of Roumania nearly thirty years ago, mingled for a time with the many-nationed swarm that composes the population of the American Metropolis, and shortly afterward made his way to the then village of Tampa—to Ybor City, the Latin cigar manufacturing quarter which had just been founded, to be more exact. This was in 1892.

The new arrival had just four words of English at his command. They were: “Give me a job.” But behind this four-word vocabulary was a great store of idealism, faith and energy—and today that pilgrimaging youth is one of the most successful business men of Florida—one who has the consciousness that his success was built on honor and a desire to serve.

From a human-interest viewpoint, no man in the State has had a more interesting career than Adam Katz, proprietor of Adam Katz Department Store Company on Seventh Avenue, which is favorably known to patrons throughout Southern and Central Florida. When he has time to give to reminiscing—well, those to whom he talks take time to listen.

Adam’s First Position

“Give me a job.” This plea was made to the firm of Gray & Dekle, then operated on a small scale by Lee Dekle and Walter B. Gray in Ybor City—and it met with a favorable response.

“I went to work,” said Mr. Katz, “with the understanding that Messrs. Gray & Dekle were to pay me what they thought my services were worth. To say that I was surprised when at the end of the month they gave me a check for \$60 doesn’t express my feelings. I was never more elated in my life.”

While working in the store Mr. Katz spent spare time in mastering the Spanish and English languages, learning Spanish first because of association and business transacting with the Latin residents of the community. Eighteen months later he had progressed to such an extent that he was made buyer for the firm and sent on a buying expedition to New York.

Adam’s Business: The Katz Store

After serving the firm for six years [*until about 1898*], Mr. Katz decided to become his own master and ventured into business for himself. He began with a capital valued at less than a thousand dollars—and on that, the big Katz store was established.

Through the early years he worked early and late, studied the needs of his growing list of patrons, sought to get the greatest variety of fabrics, and sold them at the most reasonable prices—a methodology he clung to and practised [*sic*] for the rest of his life.

He would open the store at 8 o'clock, and, after partaking of coffee in a nearby Spanish restaurant, was seldom away from his post of duty. In fact, he was practically forced to remain there by the demand of several patrons, including those of the American section of Tampa and nearby counties, whom he serve personally. Having learned their tastes and desires, he was more than equipped to make suggestions when they found themselves in quandaries.

"Sometimes I entertain the idea," he said, "that I ought to retire and rest awhile, but, really, what would life be without the privilege of working?"

Few Floridans [*sic*] had a larger income than Mr. Katz, who contributed liberally to all good causes, regardless of the denominational source from which they originated from. Nonetheless, he continued his accustomed always-busy habit because he loved to "play the game."

"My clerks," said Mr. Katz, "do not work for me—they work with me. That makes our relations more pleasant because I do not like the attitude of wanting to have people 'under you.' In order to encourage initiative and show appreciation of merit, I pay them on the percentage basis, and this gives them added interest in their work—and added profits to them and to me as well.

Furthermore, they are taught to give as much consideration to a purchaser of a package of pins as to one who is investing several hundred dollars. That, in my opinion, is the way all businesses, large and small, should be conducted—on a desire-to-serve basis."

Spanish-American Atmosphere

Because of the beauty and variety of articles of apparel carried in the Katz store it attracted the most discriminating residents and tourist visitors of Tampa, nearby cities, and towns—widely traveled, well-dressed people who knew how to, and insist upon, dressing appropriately. The same demand comes from Latin customers, who were lovers of beautiful and harmonious dress. As a result, the Katz store carried various lines of goods out of necessity, including apparel and fashion originating from Havana and fashion centers in Spain. The Katz store was known for its pleasing, Spanish-American atmosphere.

South and Central Floridans [*sic*] who were first-time visitors of this unique store in Tampa's Latin quarter found various styles and prices for the most fashionable garments that could be obtained in the day. The store specialized in a wide array of the latest clothing, dry goods, fancy goods, notions, novelties, ladies' and men's furnishings, millinery, neckwear, underwear, hosiery and shoes.

The basic principles of the Adam Katz store were:

“Careful methods and considerate attention, when backed up by dependable merchandise at purse-pleasing prices, make business friends. And business friends we regard as our most valuable asset.”

“Finding what you want, finding it at the right price, finding quick and good service—these are some of the qualities that have made for the established and growing success of this store.”

Adam Katz's hobby was his business. And his religion was an every-hour application of the Golden Rule.

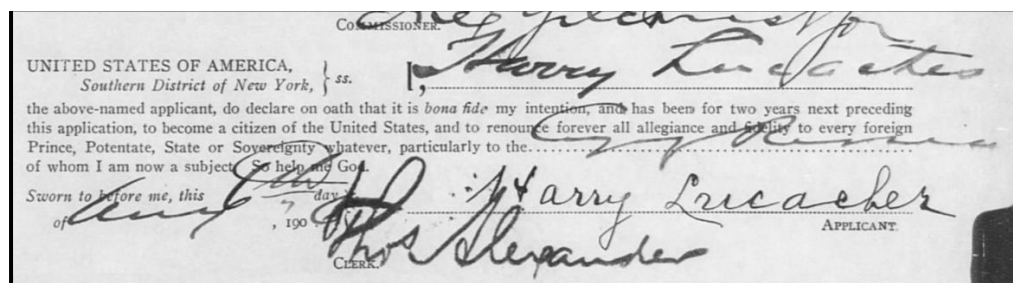
When the Bank of Ybor City was established, Mr. Katz was made vice-president and acted in this capacity until the death of John Trice in 1915. By unanimous consent, the board of directors elected Mr. Katz to succeed Mr. Trice in the presidency, and he did so until the demands of his private

business made it impossible for him to continue in that capacity. The bank, however, due in great measure to the high esteem in which the Spanish-American people held Mr. Katz, continued to grow rapidly.^{xxxiv}

In 1902, Adam married Regina Gottesman, a fellow Romanian-Jewish immigrant living in New York City.^{xxxv} Adam and Regina appear to have sheltered Harry until about 1903.^{xxxvi} At about that time, Harry also made the decision to return to New York City.

Harry's Life in New York

By 1906, Harry had journeyed north to the Lower East Side of New York City. He became a naturalized US citizen on 6 August 1906.^{xxxvii}



A portion of Harry's naturalization record, including his signature (bottom right). The text reads, "I, Harry Lucacher the above-named applicant, do declare on oath that it is bona fide my intention... to become a citizen of the United States..."

The Soffen Brothers

On Harry's Naturalization papers, he is listed as living at 33 Forsyth Street^{xxxviii}. Harry's witness for the Naturalization was Abraham Soffen, who also lived in the same building at 33 Forsyth Street.

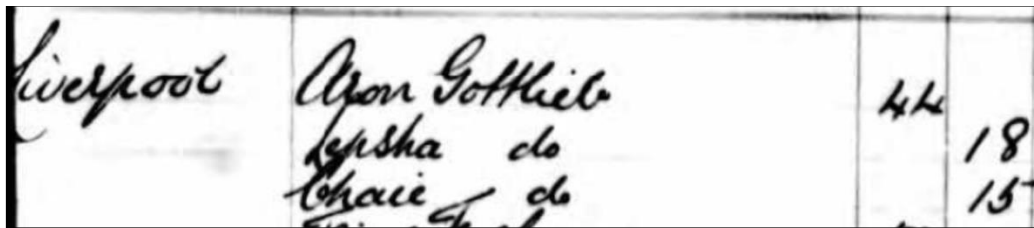
On Abraham's Naturalization papers, his brother, Jacob Soffen, served as his witness^{xxxix}. The Soffen brothers were quite close and supported each other.

Jacob also served as a witness for another Soffen brother, Samuel Soffen,^{xl} one of the fourteen founding members of the Bessarabian Verband [Association] that created the Hebrew National Orphan Home (HNOH).^{xli}

Chaia “Ida” Gottlieb

One week later, on 13 August 1906, Harry married Chaia “Ida” Gottlieb in the borough of Manhattan, also in the Lower East Side of New York.^{xlii} Ida was the daughter of Aron Gottlieb and Sheine Malke Krawitz. Harry and Ida had met at a dance.

The Gottliebs hailed from Pumpenai, a town, then located in Panevezys in the province of Kovno, Russia.^{xliii} Today, Pumpenai is in Lithuania. In late winter 1900, Ida journeyed to North America from Liverpool, England, onboard the SS *Lake Ontario*. She traveled with her father Aron and older sister Lipsha [Lena].^{xliv}

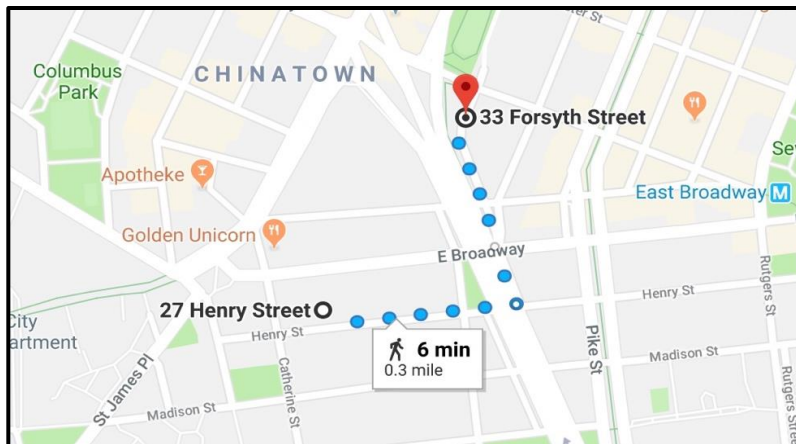


Liverpool	Aron Gottlieb	44
	Lipsha do	18
	Chaie do	15

The passenger manifest for the S.S. Lake Ontario shows Ida, age 15 (bottom) traveling with her father Aron, age 44, and sister Lepsha, age 18.

The trio landed at the port of St. John in New Brunswick, Canada, on 1 March 1900. From there, they crossed the border into the United States at St. Albans, Vermont.^{xlv} Ida’s father had only \$7.00 in his pocket. The family’s final destination was listed as Boston, Massachusetts; however Ida made her way to New York City by 1906.

At the time of her marriage, Ida lived at 27 Henry Street, an immigrant Jewish neighborhood located in the present-day neighborhood of Chinatown. Harry lived just a few minutes from Ida at 33 Forsyth Street. (Unfortunately, Ida and Harry’s residences have since been demolished.)^{xlvi}



*Ida Gottlieb (27 Henry Street) and Harry Lucacher's (33 Forsyth Street)
in New York, 1906.*

The marriage was performed at Ida's home by Rabbi M. Rifkin of the synagogue Agudath Achim Anshe Kurland.^{xlvi} Although Agudath Achim Anshe Kurland was several blocks uptown, its rabbi was Harry's close neighbor. Rabbi Rifkin lived at 11 Eldridge Street, around the corner from Harry. Perhaps Harry first met Rabbi Rifkin in their shared neighborhood.

Ten months after they married, Harry and Ida welcomed their first child. George Lucacher was born on 25 June 1907 at the family's home in Manhattan, 1 Jefferson Street.

Early Family Life

Like many New York City immigrant families, Harry and Ida moved frequently. In those days, landlords included one free month for signing a 12-month lease. All New York City leases were written with a start date of May 1st. On the first of May, New York City was a scene of chaos as families en masse picked up and moved to get their free month's rent, often moving within the same neighborhood boundaries.

But by 1910, the Lucachers moved uptown from the teeming Lower East Side to 146 East 98th Street, between Lexington and Third Avenues.^{xlvi} The

building was a large, multi-unit building with many families. With their growing family, the Lucachers would have fit right in; Ida gave birth to the couple's second child Nohama "Emma" Lucacher that year.^{xlix}

In addition to his family, Harry shared his home with two sisters-in-law, Eva and Annie Gottlieb, Ida's younger sisters.^l Harry supported the family as a leather worker making handbags, suitcases, and leather light bulb cases. He soon became the leather shop's foreman.^{li}



Harry (in front), a leather goods foreman.

Harry was very close to his uncle Abraham Goldenberg, who was his mother's brother. Uncle Abraham left Cahul and immigrated to New York City. Abraham's wife, who was named Nichoma, died before 1910. To honor Abraham's recently deceased wife, Harry and Ida named their second child Nohama. She was born on 23 June 1910. Nohama changed her name to Emma. On her marriage certificate, a legal document, Emma's name is changed from Emma Lucacher to Emma Shapiro.

PART II: The Hebrew National Orphan Home

Bessarabian Verband [Association]

Harry showed his allegiance to Bessarabia by being a member of the Kishinever Sick and Benevolent Society, a Bessarabian “landsmen” society that provided help to its members in times of need and also helped pay for burial plots and funeral expenses.^{lii} The Bessarabian Verband was formed by an association of immigrants from Bessarabia who made up a group of Romanian Jews living in New York City.^{liii} This group had a great affinity for the “old country.”

In the early 1900s, a family needed two parents to survive. If one parent left or died, the family fell apart. This was happening to the Jewish immigrants who moved to the Lower East Side of Manhattan. In 1912, the Bessarabian Verband began making plans for a new venture dedicated to take care of orphaned and poverty-stricken Jewish boys: The Hebrew National Orphan House, later known as the Hebrew National Orphan Home, or the HNOH.

The beginnings of the HNOH were humble, but its leadership was committed to its mission:

On December 5, 1912, a committee of the Bessarabian Verband [Association], a group of Roumanian Jews on the Lower East Side of Manhattan scraped up \$64 from their impecunious neighbors to open an orthodox home for 20 orphaned and destitute Jewish boys. [Bessarabia is a region that is mostly in Moldova today. In 1912, it was part of Romania.] On October 14, 1913, they paid the first installment of \$400 for a remodeled brownstone at 39 East 7th Street, between First and Second Avenues in what was then the Lower East Side and is now the East Village. Only boys six to 13 were admitted... Girls were more readily taken in by relatives and, anyhow, they were considered less in need of the Orthodox Jewish training offered in the new institution.^{liv}

As previously mentioned, Harry was probably aware of the mission of the Bessarabian Verband and the HNOH through his relationships with the Soffen brothers and his association with the Kishinever Sick and Benevolent Society.

These three organizations had a social ethic to help younger and older people who faced staggering problems. They were also Harry's "landsmen" from Bessarabia. The social responsibility and their shared homeland may have influenced Harry to become involved with fundraising for the HNOH before being promoted to Business Manager, and then Superintendent.

The Hebrew National Orphan Home aka "HNOH," "The Home," or the "H"

Nineteen fourteen was one of the most important years in Harry's life.

It was in this year that the Bessarabian Verband, headed by Leo Lerner, bought two buildings on East Seventh Street in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, thus officially opening the Hebrew Orphan House, later renamed to the Hebrew National Orphan Home (HNOH).



57 East 7th Street, the location of the "H" from 1913 to 1920.

On June 7, 1914, the Hebrew Orphan House, as it was originally named, officially opened with accommodations for 50 boys.

Later, the "H", as it was called, bought a second tenement that backed onto the original building, creating an enclosed courtyard, and doubling the home's capacity to 100 boys.

Along with the orphanage's opening, Harry began his work. Little did he know, the HNOH would shape the course of his life and cement his legacy as a beloved social servant.

Growth and Relocation

By 1915, Harry relocated his young family to the Bronx.^{lv} They lived in today's South Bronx area at 511 Union Avenue. Their home was in a large building that housed many families, including a few familiar faces. Ida's father Aron, sister Eva, brother-in-law Isaac Meltsner, and baby niece Sylvia also lived in the building.^{lvi} Ida's sister Eva married Isaac Meltsner, a postal clerk, the previous year.^{lvii} Their daughter, Sylvia Meltsner, was born in 1915.^{lviii} Clearly, Harry had a close relationship with his in-laws.

While Harry raised his family in the Bronx, there was turmoil abroad. In 1917, the United States joined World War I. After unsuccessful attempts to recruit sufficient troops, the country announced a draft. Men who were Harry's age were compelled to register.

Due to Harry's age and his roles as a father and the sole provider for his family, Harry was less likely to be drafted. He may even have been exempted, if his income was low enough. His family was probably relieved that he was spared fighting, especially considering their new addition: Ida gave birth to the couple's daughter, also named Sylvia, Sylvia Lucacher, on 2 January 1917.^{lix}

A note on naming of their daughters: both Ida and Eva were two of six daughters who promised to honor their deceased mother, Sheina Malka Gottlieb, by naming their daughters after her. In total, six young cousins were given the first and middle initials of "S.M." Since most of the girls were named "Sylvia," they could only distinguish themselves from each other by their last names.^{lx}

A Picturesque, New Setting

As Harry's family grew, so too did the HNOH. The buildings on East Seventh Street were soon overcrowded, so the Bessarabian Verband borrowed funds to buy an old, more spacious, institutional building in rural Yonkers, just north of New York City:



The new building at 407 Tuckahoe Road. Image source: H.L.A.S.

“On July 15, 1919, a facility on Tuckahoe Road in [Yonkers, New York](#) was purchased for \$300,000, and the home moved there on July 26, 1920.”^{lxi}

Harry was instrumental in enabling the HNOH’s move. He spearheaded the fundraising efforts and his success soon earned him new positions within the organization.^{lxii}

An HNOH alumnus recalled the partially rural and isolated setting, as a far cry from the HNOH’s urban beginnings:

On July 20, 1920, the boys moved 17 miles north to a 20-acre site purchased for \$300,000 the year before from a philanthropic organization known as the German Odd Fellows.

Located at 407 Tuckahoe Road, a mile west of the village of Tuckahoe and a little more than a mile east of Nepperhan Avenue, where the trolley line from downtown Yonkers ended ... its new location made Sunday afternoon visits a difficult two-hour (or more) journey from Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx, where most of the relatives lived.

Still, The Home was not completely isolated: a five-to-ten-minute walk east brought one to Theodore Roosevelt High School at the intersection of Tuckahoe Road and Central Avenue, and many of the boys would sneak under the fences to see high school football and baseball games free or to use the athletic fields themselves on days when there were no school events, usually Sundays....^{lxiii}



*An artist's rendition of the Hebrew National Orphan Home on its 20-acre site.
Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing Group. A.R. 1932.*

The picture above depicts The Home, a large, four-story, red-brick building where the boys lived, played, ate, worshipped, and attended public and Hebrew School. At the north end of the building was a two-story, “new” gymnasium surrounded by athletic fields. Along the right side of the building, were apple and pear orchards.

A large flagpole stood at the front of The Home, where the boys would pledge allegiance to the flag every morning before religious services and breakfast. The front of The Home led into a nice lobby and lounge, with a grand central stairway.

On the left of The Home were employee cottages on the north and the south end of the property. Along the north were fields of farmland. The tennis court was on the south end. On the far left, was the barn. Chicken coops were located to the north of the barn and several playgrounds with swings, slides, and seesaws were located between the barn and The Home. This new home provided a much healthier climate for the boys to live in, than the densely populated and air-polluted setting of New York City.^{lxiv}

Harry the Business Manager (1920 – 1930)

Harry began his association with the HNOH as a fund raiser early in the HNOH's existence. From the 1920 New York State Census and Federal Census, it looks like he kept his regular job as a leather worker and did fund raising in his spare time. Harry spent a great deal of his quarter century working for the Hebrew National Orphan Home (HNOH) raising money to feed, cloth, shelter, and provide a secular and religious education for the boys at the orphan home.

The fact that 'The Home' survived solely on private donations was an incredible feat, considering the Depression that was sweeping across the nation. However, Harry was quite the business man – persuasive and adept at putting together and orchestrating “impressive”^{lxv} events that raised over \$3,000 in donations each. These events often had performances of prominent entertainers in opera, music, and theater, as well as speeches from many local leaders. Harry's inspiring pleas and efforts moved many attendees to make private donations of \$100-\$200 at each event.^{lxvi} This is equivalent to a 21st century fundraiser raising over \$30,000 in donations with individuals dishing out \$1,000-\$2,000 in donations.^{lxvii}

Harry not only was deeply involved with fundraising on a local level, he also played a key role in launching a national campaign to mobilize Jewish supporters across the entire United States to help provide a constant and steady income for 'The Home'. His efforts helped 'The Home' become one of the largest orthodox Jewish institutions of its kind in the U.S.^{lxviii} For the kick-off event in 'The Home's' national fundraising campaign, Harry assembled popular entertainers of Jewish folk music and recruited the help of public figures to deliver moving speeches. At the event, Harry acted as a Yiddish translator to ensure that the messages were equally powerful for those who did not have a good grasp of the English language.^{lxix}

Perhaps Harry's most notable qualities as a business manager was his ability to attract the help of like-minded individuals who were equally passionate about the cause of 'The Home' and the welfare of its boys. He could not have accomplished so much without the incredible dedication and collaborative

efforts of the countless ladies' auxiliaries that pitched in to make each fundraising event a success.

Harry spoke to the Mens' and Ladies' Auxiliaries of synagogues and other Jewish charitable organizations, asking them for donations for the Home. He took his daughters, Emma and Sylvia with him. They always tried to be on their best behavior. On one occasion, at a breakfast hosted by Judge Aaron Levy, a great supporter of the HNOH, stewed prunes were served as part of the brunch. Harry's daughters did not know what to do with the prune pits and they laughed at their predicament. They retold this story about their disruptive behavior at the dignified occasion many times.

Goldenberg Furnishing Store

Harry also founded a new corporation with his uncle Abraham Goldenberg and Abraham's second wife Yetta Goldenberg.^{lxx} The trio established Goldenberg Furnishing Store in Brooklyn, a purveyor of "clothing, dry goods, [and] silks."^{lxxi} Little information about the business has survived, and no advertisements for the business were found in local newspapers. However, in 1924, "Goldenberg Furnishing Co." was sued in Brooklyn's Municipal Court by a plaintiff "Reeves."^{lxxii} The Municipal Court handled cases involving damages under \$1000, ranging from fraud to personal injury to modifications to business partnerships.^{lxxiii}

Full-Time Employment at the HNOH

The Lucachers and the Meltsner/Gottliebs continued living in the same building—later at 509 Union Avenue—until about 1922.^{lxxiv} By 1922, Harry left leather working and started working full time as a "Clerk" in the Federal Census, for the HNOH. However, this role may be related to the garment industry.^{lxxv lxxvi}

At about that time, the Lucachers moved a few minutes north, to Bryant Avenue in the Bronx.^{lxxvii} The location put the family slightly closer to the HNOH. It was a smart move: by 1925, the HNOH promoted Harry to the

position of Business Manager, partly in recognition of his efforts to secure funding for the new site.^{lxxviii lxxix}

Harry worked in Yonkers under superintendent George Goldenberg, who was possibly a relative on Harry's maternal side. A large part of his job was to raise money to feed, clothe, educate, and shelter the boys and to pay off the mortgage. He accomplished these tasks by coordinating many ladies' auxiliaries which sponsored events to raise money for the orphanage. Harry spent a good deal of his time speaking at luncheons and gatherings, encouraging the attendees to donate money to support the orphanage.

Harry took charge of all benefit events, graduations, and the Bar Mitzvahs. These occasions helped raise money for the upkeep of the orphanage.^{lxxx} The Bar Mitzvahs and graduations were held at the Hotel Commodore and the Hotel Astor. The HNOH Band provided the musical entertainment.



Harry Lucacher with his "Bar Mitzvah Boys" at the Hebrew National Orphan Home.

Rigid Regime at the HNOH

Strict discipline and rigid regimentation were commonplace at the HNOH. The dormitories were like Army barracks. All beds had the same metal frame cots that had to align perfectly for the monitors' inspections. If any bed was made poorly or not properly aligned, the boy who slept in it was punished.^{lxxxix}

Before dinner the boys would assemble in their dormitories and form two straight lines before marching down the flight of stairs into the dining room. When the head supervisor entered the room, chairs scraped the terrazzo floor as the boys pushed back their chairs to stand erect. Once the supervisor verified that the boys were orderly and silent, a prayer was given, followed by announcements, and then the boys were allowed to slide back into their seats, waiting for the food cart to be wheeled out by the kitchen attendants. If the boys made the slightest noise, the food cart would return to the kitchen until a long "shhh" filled the dining room and the room was again silent.^{lxxxii}

In some cases, more harsh discipline was handed out. Jerry Pincus remembers a dinner when four boys tried to hit a high note, trying to replicate a feat they had just seen while watching a movie in their new gym. The lead actor, an opera star, kept breaking glass whenever he hit a high note. Unfortunately, the boys' efforts interrupted the quiet of supper. The junior dorm supervisor, Mr. Kersh from Finland, immediately ended the hardly begun meal of boiled potatoes and sour cream, which was a favorite of the boys. Instead, Mr. Kersh marched the boys to the dormitory where he opted to brutally beat the four boys in front of the whole 130-boy dormitory. Jerry's brother was one of the four, so that memory is emblazoned in his mind.^{lxxxiii}

Discipline & Sadistic Supervisors

There was a strong tradition in Orthodox Jewry to beat the child who was not succeeding in Hebrew School. Corporal discipline carried over into all the Jewish orphanages. Bill Weinstein recalls discipline, even for the smallest infractions, "was as routine as going to the bathroom."^{lxxxiv} Discipline ranged

from loss of sports or playground activities to withholding radio and movie privileges, to extra chores or detention.^{lxxxv}

During the severe and prevailing Depression in the 1920s & 1930s,^{lxxxvi} a number of untrained drifters were hired as supervisors at the HNOH. The staff was underpaid and some were sadistic. They knew of no other way of maintaining control over the 400 boys than by physically punishing those boys who defied authority. These men were threatened by a direct look, question, body language, or posture that carried a spirit of confidence. They reveled in breaking a boy with violence to teach him a lesson.^{lxxxvii}

Often these supervisors gave the dorm monitors, or “big brothers,” free reign to impose physical harassment and sexual abuses to keep the boys in line and quiet, so that they would not report the abuses taking place. Unfortunately, this kept Harry Lucacher, the then Superintendent, in the dark about the abuses that were being inflicted on the boys by their supervisors and big brothers. Harry Lucacher was a good man and kind administrator who would have never tolerated such abusive behaviors.^{lxxxviii}

“Detention,” or assuming rigid positions, was also commonplace. As punishment, the boys would have to assume rigid positions, such as bed-sitting, standing, or squatting for hours on end, with the slightest movement resulting in a severe slap or blow. Detention was used to identify boys charged with stealing, destructive acts, or making noise when the group was supposed to be silent. However, none of the boys would ever turn in another boy to be disciplined, even though they would often doing their own “punishing of the guilty” afterwards.^{lxxxix}

While group discipline rarely resolved the issue, it allowed sadistic supervisors, such as Leo Youdleman^{xc} and “The Colonel” the satisfaction of beating the boys into submission. “The Colonel” was the head supervisor, former Army Colonel, and purported grandson of the author Hans Christian Andersen.^{xci}

The Colonel was known for holding weekly caning sessions at 10 A.M. every Saturday morning, delivering blows for each demerit the boys earned from their dorm supervisor or “big brothers.”^{xcii}

Traditions and Heroes

Harry Lucacher changed the institution’s tone during the Depression through his hiring choices. When HNOH graduates were unable to get jobs, they returned back to Mr. Lucacher, the then Home Superintendent. He told them, “You can have a job coaching or supervising. You can have a room with a bed, a roof over your head, and three meals daily. If I can find the money, I will pay you.”^{xciii} The young men hired under these conditions were dedicated and treated the children with kindness and care.

Oscar Horowitz, Lou Resnick, and Manny Cohen led the “Great Potato Rebellion” against unjust HNOH authority—and won. In this act, instead of coming in for evening prayers and supper in the late 20s or early 30s, all of the boys remained in the potato field where they had been harvesting, and when the staff came after them, the boys held them at bay by throwing potatoes at them. The supervisors eventually gave in and agreed to make some changes in their unjust rules and acts. Those young rebels joined the ranks of the Maccabees.^{xciv}

Charles “Chick” Baker was a 17-year-old who stood up to “The Colonel.” Chick, inspired by Harry Lucacher’s love and example, did more than any boy to shelter his mates and the younger kids from harm by his quiet refusal to accept injustice without some gesture of resistance. Each time he paid for that resistance. By deflecting the attention from others to himself, he provided a sheltering umbrella for the orphan brothers he loved so unashamedly and without reservation.^{xcv}

Harry Lucacher, A Quiet Giant

Harry was a healthy, 5’8” tall man weighing about 180 lbs. He had a slightly dark complexion with a receding hairline and deep-furrowed brows. Harry

spoke with a soft, gentle voice and was always cordial, though he never smiled.^{x cvi} He was a solitary man, quiet and solemn, and much of his greatness was unseen. He was constantly working behind the scenes, always worried for the welfare of The Home and his boys.



*Harry Lucacher's
trolley-pass photo.*

Sylvia Lucacher Dolgin (Harry's daughter) reported that Harry was a quiet and solitary man. When he was troubled, he played his opera records and paced back and forth while he was thinking. Harry loved Enrico Caruso and had several of Caruso's records. Harry's favorite opera was "Pagliacci." Harry also enjoyed listening to Jan Peerce. He enjoyed Peerce's rendition of "The Bluebird of Happiness." Peerce was born Jacob Pincus Perelmuth and lived on the Lower East Side not far from where Harry and Ida Lucacher originally lived.

Of all the superintendents who led The Home, "none suffered the financial and social embarrassment of poverty as did Mr. Lucacher."^{x cvii} Harry struggled to keep The Home alive during the nation's Great Depression, a time when many children's organizations crumbled in financial despair and the only institutions left standing seemed to be the ones supported by large philanthropic foundations.

Harry, however, was left alone, without a salary, government support or help of philanthropists like Carnegie. Everything was day-to-day. If money was not raised, there was no food for 400 boys the next day. Harry's daughter, Sylvia remembers how it was growing up during those times:

"We were poor ... My father wasn't getting a salary. The only way we could have lived was if we moved to a little old house on the orphanage grounds. There was no heat in the place. You could not bathe in the wintertime. The house was very old and needed repair. We lived downstairs, and the people who worked for the orphanage lived upstairs. It was a terrible house. It was very uncomfortable. We were not happy there, but we had no choice. My father received no

wages, and most of the time, there was barely enough food for the children in the orphanage.”^{xcviii}

Under such conditions and pressure, it was common for people to mistakenly assume that Harry was frowning or angry all the time but that was not the case. Harry was unlike most administrators of the day, who used rulers and sticks to enforce discipline. In spite of the insurmountable problems that he faced, Harry always managed to care for others who needed his help. He was often known to hire those going through rough times. He was very direct and honest with those he hired, saying, “You will receive room and board, plus \$30 a month – IF I have it.”^{xcix}

Although quiet, Harry was not timid. He fired sadistic counselors and hired good ones. He was passionate about his boys and never hesitated to promote their welfare. When the vice president of The Home’s board of directors asked a child, “Did you *davin* (pray) today?” Harry boldly countered with his own question, “Why don’t you ask him, ‘Did you eat today?’”^c

Said Charles “Chick” Baker:

“The wind of the Great Depression swept repeatedly through the halls of the orphanage during his watch. But this man did not falter. He did not whine. He met his adversary head-on, face-to-face, and fought it out. There is no doubt that poverty can destroy the personality of an individual. An extreme feeling of dependency and its stress can raise havoc with the mind. There is no question but that the constant struggle with that demon—the Depression—left its mark on this wonderful person. Yet, no one, except those who knew him well, was aware that the grave and grim expression on his face was not anger but the symbol of his cross. Never did I hear him yell at anyone. Never did I ever hear him speak disrespectfully to a child. Never did I hear him express rage at his fate, at his daily struggles. He contained it all within himself. A long time ago I heard “character” described as how a person behaves when no one is watching. Much of the greatness of this man, Lucacher, was very rarely seen, perhaps because he was a solitary person”^{ci}

Fundraising

Professionally, Harry soon gained a reputation as a dogged and highly effective fundraiser. His tenacity ensured the HNOH's survival. In 1928, Harry and others announced an ambitious, nationwide fundraising campaign. At the campaign kickoff event, which attracted over 1,000 people, Harry delivered his appeal to the crowd in Yiddish.^{cii}

He and others announced memberships at different levels of giving, a familiar non-profit strategy. Harry surely had high hopes for the initiative. However, there was trouble ahead.

The year following Harry's speech, the Great Depression began. Suddenly, Harry's responsibilities took on greater urgency and importance. He needed to find a way to keep the HNOH running and the orphans sheltered, clothed, and fed. The donor class, which would normally have funded the HNOH, stumbled in the wake of its stock market losses. More parents could not afford to care for their children, so they sent them to facilities like the HNOH in greater numbers. Harry likely had to rely on every ounce of creativity he possessed. It was surely a professional challenge like no other he had faced previously.

“Except for those children's institutions that were financially endowed by philanthropic organizations, such as by Carnegie and a few others, most children's agencies were in deep financial despair.”^{ciii}

And, somehow, Harry succeeded. The HNOH did not fail, and Harry's impressive efforts gained notice both inside the HNOH community and beyond. Although they could see the effects, the HNOH's residents may not have understood the extent of Harry's struggles. In 1932, the HNOH defaulted on its mortgages and fell into a deep debt; the institution owed more than \$80,000.^{civ} A foreclosure suit was filed; without the funds, closure was imminent.

But Harry wasn't giving up that easily. The HNOH regularly held bar mitzvahs, which were followed by banquets at the Commodore Hotel. At five of these celebrations, "Harry Lucacher kept pitching for funds to eliminate the \$100,000 mortgage," per alumnus Harry Morse.^{cv} At a certain point, alumnus Sam George Arcus shrewdly suspected that the superintendent had "paid off [the mortgage] many times, but Harry Lucacher kept asking." Eventually Harry tweaked his goal from mortgage payments to, "Chanukah gelt for the children."^{cvi}

Harry's efforts to support the HNOH extended past the institution's walls. Sam George Arcus, an HNOH graduate, recalled that Harry went above and beyond to care for his charges, even after they "graduated" from the H:

It was after all, the depth of the Great Depression and money was hard to come by. Yet, despite the desperate times Harry Lucacher nevertheless found the time and wherewithal to "rescue" alumni like Charles "Chick" Baker and Murray Julius who were having difficulties in managing on the outside and weathering the bad times.

And simultaneously he attended to his charges in the institution, protecting them against the rigidities of the well-intentioned Abraham Lewins. Chick was "hired" as the athletic coach and relief supervisor, and Murray as waiter and orchestra leader and later as the Freshman supervisor with Lucacher promising to pay them whatever, and whenever, he could.^{cvi}

A Fine Establishment

As Harry accepted greater work responsibilities, the HNOH matured as an institution. The Home's President, Justice Aaron J. Levy, did much for the boys to make sure they had the best Jewish and American education possible and made sure they were engaged in many wholesome activities. This included summer camps, Boy Scouts, student government, community events, and more. It soon garnered a reputation for excellence in the area—sometimes in unexpected ways. The boys won many awards and recognition

for excellence in gardening, band, and various sports. The HNOH's baseball team won every game in its 1932 season and its basketball team won 30 of 31 games the same year.^{cviii}

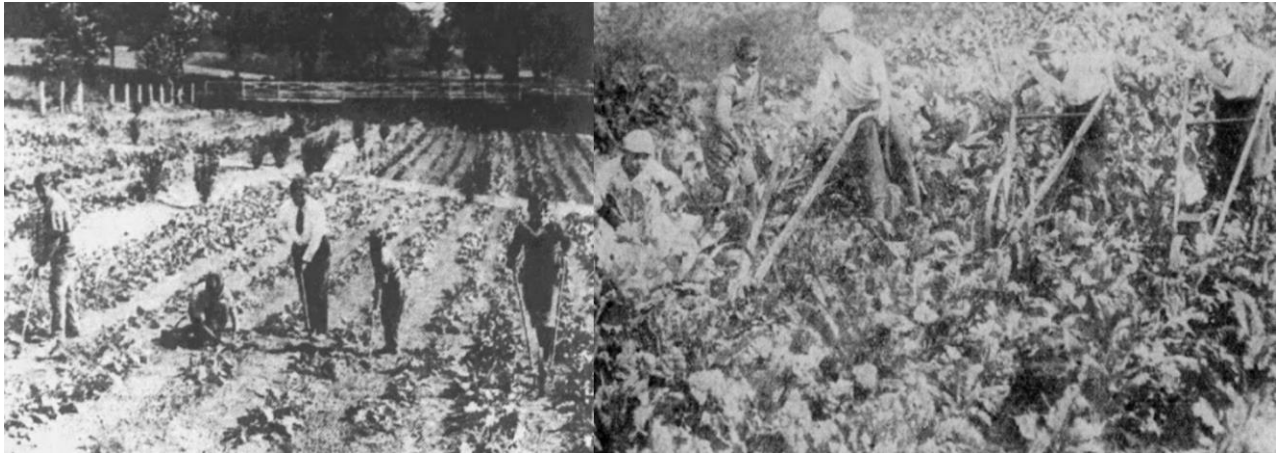
In 1925, the New York City Board of Education held a contest to select "the finest of school gardens" in the area. Out of 350 schools, the HNOH came in first.^{cix} The following year, a group of local officials posed with Harry and George Goldenberg in the gardens. The boys of The Home won the prize for best school garden in New York City for over four consecutive years.^{cx}



*From left to right: "Dr. A. S. Rocklin and Dr. P. G. Bauerberg, both members of the medical staff of the home and also directors; Supreme Court Judge Aron J. Levy, president of the home; George Goldenberg, superintendent of the home on Tuckahoe Road; Park Commissioner Otto Frey, of Yonkers; **Harry Lucacher**, manager of the home; and Van Ervie Kilpatrick, Director of the School Garden Association of New York city [sic]."*

During this time, Harry also contributed to other charitable organizations. He was a longtime member of the Kishinever Sick Benevolent Society of New York, which provided a wide range of support, from senior services to the care of burial plots.^{cx}

An Award-winning Garden



On the left, the boys cultivating their fields in 1925, after winning the best school garden award in New York City. On the right, five years later, the boys continue to enjoy a plentiful harvest. Photos courtesy of The Yonkers Herald.

The Home was the only institution of its kind in the United States that encouraged horticultural work as part of its routine for its orphans. The Home's President, Justice Aaron J. Levy, arranged a summer class in with landscape artist David Rifkin, to transform the entire grounds of The Home so that it would “shine out as one of the brightest spots in scenic Westchester County.”^{cxii} and “inspire [in] the American Jewish youth the importance of the value of agriculture.”^{cxiii}

Not only did the boys win prizes from the New York City's Board of Education for the best garden, but they received multiple awards from the Metropolitan Museum of Natural History and New York World for the best display of vegetables and flowers.^{cxiv}

Helping the boys achieve that success was a joint garden project with the New York educational system. Under the direction of Irving Rosenthal and Charles Townson, the children operated a 10-acre farm that covered half of The Home's property and included the care for livestock.^{cxv} The boys received tools, seeds, and summer training from the New York education system.^{cxvi}

Mr. Van Evrie Kilpatrick, Director of Nature Garden Work, New York Public Schools commented on the program, stating that:

“Such instruction gives the average boy a fuller knowledge of life, a greater appreciation of nature and natural phenomenon, a larger sense of responsibility, aside from physical development.”^{cxvii}

Of the garden project, Justice Aaron J. Levy declared that:

“There is no single project conducted at the Home that could have brought greater spiritual, physical, or moral values to the building of the life and character of our boys than the work of the School Garden and the Home Farm.”^{cxviii}

George Goldenberg, who carefully followed the garden project from the beginning, sent a letter to The Home, commending the boys for their accomplishments:

“Far more than you realize you have proven to all the juvenile institutions of the country that children could do much to carry their own weight, and that is of the greatest benefit to themselves, and educational in every sense if they are given simplified and expert instruction in horticulture.”^{cxix}

Farm Life

The boys followed a set farming schedule, with preparations of the fields in April, seeding of crops in May and June, cultivating, weeding, and harvesting in the late summer months and fall, and plowing, landscaping, and repairing farm machinery in the winter. Boys also learned about farming through lectures and chores, that included caring for the chickens and animals, and performing chores such as ditch drainage and road repair. Later on, under New Deal legislation, the boys were paid for their labors on a profit-sharing basis.^{cxx}

The farm gave the orphans a responsibility and the hard work appealed to some of the boys, who could see the “fruits of their labors” by working with the land and the animals. Boys interested in agriculture were sent to the National Farm School located near Doylestown, PA to receive career training in all forms of farm and garden work.^{cxxi}

The Home had farmlands, gardens, an extensive chicken coop supplying fresh eggs daily, two horses to pull plows and wagons, a large number of trained squirrels, and goats.^{cxxii}

The Central Avenue police had quite the scare one morning when it received a call to “Come quick: 23 kids have been killed at the Hebrew National Orphan Home.” They made a quick recovery when they learned that the victims were The Home’s goats that were attacked by a group of wild dogs.^{cxxiii}

Feeding Growing Boys

Between the school garden and the home farm, the boys produced all the wholesome produce of the market, including cabbage, lettuce, Swiss chard, kolhrabi, onions, scallions, radishes, potatoes, beets, carrots, cucumbers, beans, peas, tomatoes, sweet corn, flowers, perennials (strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries).^{cxxiv} The Home also had a daily supply of fresh eggs, with a record of 37,285 eggs produced over a nine-month span of time in 1940 (136 eggs/day).^{cxxv}

The boy farmers gave much of the vegetables, eggs, and fruit to The Home’s kitchen to make meals for the all the boys and staff in The Home. It was both satisfying and gratifying for the boys to eat delicious meals made with the fruits of their own labor.

The Home had two kitchens—one dedicated for meat meals and the other, for dairy. North of the kitchens was the kitchen yard, where all the deliveries were made, including coal, foodstuffs, milk, and clothing. The road coming

out of the kitchen yard followed the aqueduct supplying water to New York City's thirsty millions.^{cxxvi}

In addition to the goods produced on the farm, many food items did have to be brought in to feed all of the growing orphans, who had healthy appetites and would eat over 1,000 cooked meals a day. The meals required 1,470 loaves of bread, 160 pounds of butter, 40 cans of milk, 1740 pounds of potatoes, and 640 pounds of meat each week.^{cxxvii}



The Home's chef, Manuel Marino, preparing a meal for the orphans in 1932. Mr. Marino was a Spaniard and would sometimes make the boys Spanish dishes. Courtesy of the Yonkers Statesman.

Harry the Superintendent (1931 – 1938)^{cxxviii}

By 1930, Harry and his family moved to 2294 Grand Avenue in the Fordham Heights neighborhood of the Bronx. Just as before, his literal move coincided with a professional one as well. Around mid-1930, Harry became the Superintendent of the HNOH.^{cxxix} Harry was already beloved by the boys in his care, but his promotion to superintendent was met with fresh enthusiasm.

A Juvenile Fire Department

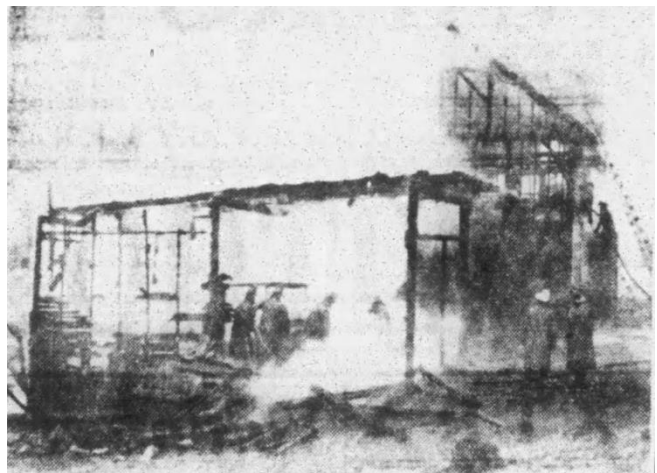
Soon after Harry became The Home's superintendent, he reached out to the fire department to assess The Home's fire prevention program. Although the fire department assured him that The Home was already fireproof, with properly marked exits, and every precaution taken to minimize fire hazards, including efficient evacuation processes, Harry was still worried for the safety of the boys.

This was especially true in light of the multiple fires that occurred at The Home as well as other schools and other similar institutions in the area.

Orphan Home's Barn Damaged By Fire.

The picture to the right shows firemen fighting the blaze which damaged the HNOH's barn. Two horses kept in the barn were led to safety, but a quantity of agricultural equipment was damaged.

*Courtesy of the Yonkers Herald
(February 9th, 1931).^{cxxx}*



Together with the fire department, Harry implemented an onsite juvenile fire department consisting of 200 captains and lieutenant captains. These boys

were trained weekly in the most modern fire-fighting techniques, use of extinguishers, evacuation protocols, and fire prevention tactics.



The Establishment of a Juvenile Fire Department (Harry Lucacher on the far right). Courtesy of The Yonker's Herald.

This program was innovative—the first of its kind—paving the way for others institutions to follow in suit.^{cxxxix}

A 1932 article in the Yonker's Herald commented that the program had “ramifications far beyond the protection of the one institution, for it brings into new play the whole matter of fire prevention in the community and it educates in skilled fire fighting a group which soon will take its place in controlling the destiny of the community.”^{cxxxix}

Renewed Public Support

At the same time that Harry was progressively addressing fire safety in The Home, the organization was facing imminent closure. Despite all of Harry's best efforts, The Home still fell \$28,000 short of its budget for the year and had more than \$13,000 in defaulted mortgage payments. This led to the mortgage holders filing a foreclosure suit against The Home.

The Home's situation was dire – not only was it in default of its mortgage payments, its total debt obligations was nearly \$80,000. In light of this situation, Harry launched a campaign to raise \$100,000 to cover its debts and maintenance fees.^{cxxxix}



“The Home” Facing Imminent Closure. Courtesy of The New York Times.

After making a renewed plea for public support, Harry relied heavily on the help of various individuals and ladies’ auxiliaries to keep The Home afloat. Judge Aaron J. Levy donated much of his time each week to attend many of these fundraising events, often speaking at the events to encourage attendees to contribute in any way possible to keep The Home’s doors open.

Harry was also instrumental in making arrangements for “Alumni Days,” which brought together many of the HNOH graduates, many of whom became doctors, lawyers, accountants, dentists, teachers, rabbis, horticulturists, salesmen, mechanics, and college students. These events included dinners, sports events, concerts, and entertainment and often brought in crowds of 300-500 alumni and friends.^{CXXXIV} These HNOH graduates, were ever grateful to Harry for taking them under his wing, and were often more than willing to provide means to provide for The Home and its boys.

Harry did not have an office staff at the orphanage, but he needed typing done. When Sylvia Lucacher was a school girl, on Saturdays, she worked in Harry’s office, typing for him. He paid her for her work out of his own money. Sylvia was an excellent typist. She was fast and accurate, and never

misspelled a word. She always consulted her dictionary. Harry and his daughter Sylvia had a wonderful relationship.

With time, Harry's professional hardships lessened slightly. The New Deal enabled destitute parents to keep their families together, rather than place their children at orphanages during times of extreme hardship.

Part III: Boys' Activities

Harry Lucacher transformed the way that the HNOH was run – from the rigid regimented leadership that pushed the boys out of The Home at the age of 16, to one with humane supervisors who could provide the boys with a variety of clubs and activities to enrich their lives and prepare them for life after leaving the HNOH. The farm, band, clubs, sports teams and other activities gave the boys a place of belonging, where lifelong friendships could be forged and cherished memories shared, to truly make “The Home” their own.



*Boys in front of the Hebrew National Orphan Home.
Image source: H. L. A. S. A.R. 1936*

The March of the Yacermalachs

Life as an orphan was hard in the early 1900s. Even the residents of overcrowded tenements, toiling away in mid-town sweatshops or uptown factories in New York, would watch with pity as the young “yacermalachs” or orphan boys, would pass by in their solemn procession each morning, marching in two straight rows, holding hands for safety, making their way along East 7th Street to First Avenue, then down to 5th Street, and finally eastward toward Avenue A, heading to P.S. 25.^{cxxxv}

The boys were separated by age group into military-style “companies” and were kept to a strict daily routine where bare essentials were provided and punishment meted out by cruel supervisors. They ate hot cereal for breakfast and were given a brown paper bag with a sandwich before marching off to school at P.S. 25.^{cxxxvi} Once the boys turned sixteen years of age, they were culled out and thrown into society with half an education and with no foresight as to how to make a living.^{cxxxvii}

A New Era

When Harry Lucacher became the Superintendent of the Home, he eliminated the “Company System.” The boys were now entitled to finished high school. The militaristic-type people were no longer hired. He hired humane supervisors who would also act as athletic directors, coaches, and club supervisors.

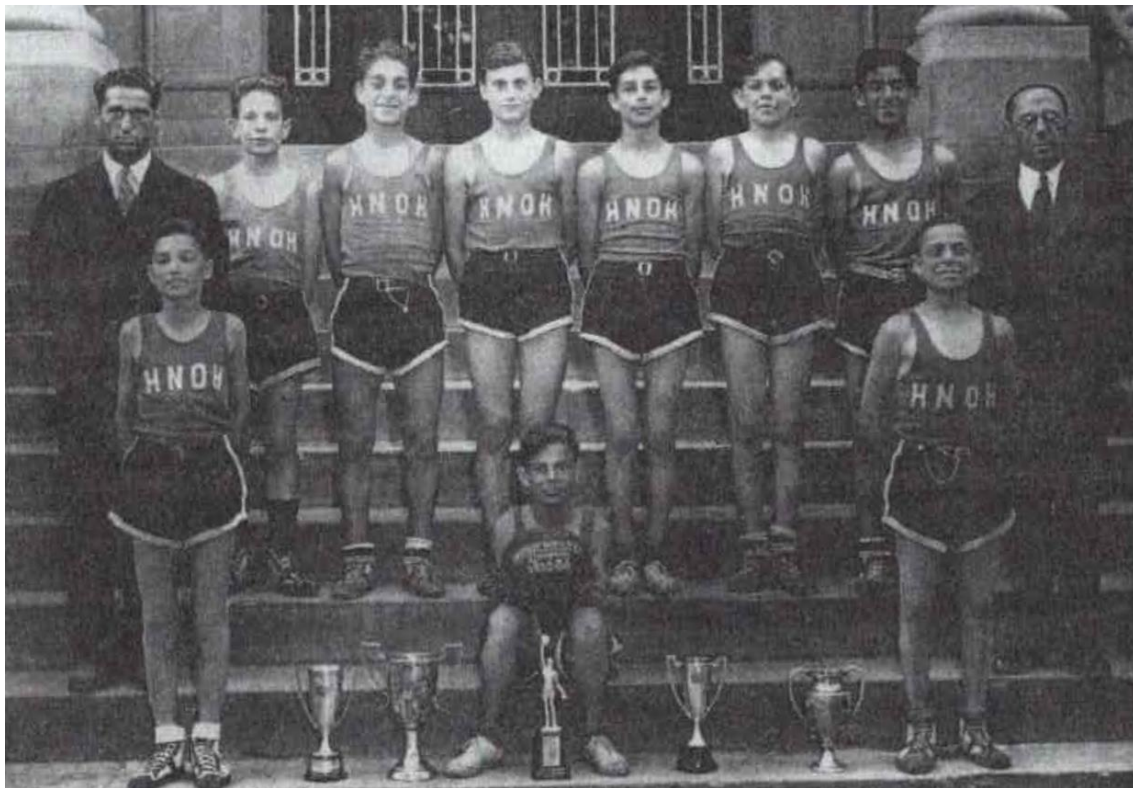
He often hired alumni out of work, such as Chick Baker, even if he couldn’t pay them. Even if he didn’t receive pay, Charles Baker explained that it never bothered him, “Having a job and feeling like a somebody and having a home was sufficient. I was at home.”^{cxxxviii} Harry was resourceful in improving the diet and quality of life for the boys.



Photo Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing.

He had the boys provide for Judge Aaron Levy's herd of goats so that the boys would have the best goats' milk for nutrition. He hired skilled staff to manage the farm's production, kitchen, bakery, and tailors to custom-tailor all of the boys' clothing, suits, and laundered items.^{cxxxix}

Under Harry's care, the boys excelled in many sports and their many awards were proudly displayed in Harry's office and in the Main Hallway. There were championship trophies for basketball, track and field, tennis, and baseball. When the boys from the HNOH went around the people would shout, "There go the boys of the HNOH and their Superintendent is Mr. Lucacher."^{cxl}



Harry Lucacher and the 1935-36 Westchester County Public School Athletic League (PSAL) championship basketball team. First and second row, left to right, Coach Charles "Chick" Baker, Al Fleischman, Marty Miller (seated), Ted Kolleck, Harry Lucacher. Back row, left to right, Morris Padover, Leo Liebowitz, Seymour Kasonskey, Jack Shapiro, Ted Greenburg, and Pinky Leibowitz. Courtesy of the Greenwood Publishing Group.

In the October '97 issue of *The Alumnus* that featured the photo on the previous page, the caption read, “this championship team—coached by an alumnus—is what established the HNOH’s reputation for basketball excellence.”^{cxli}

Throughout the 20s, 30s, and 40s, PSAL youth dominated high school varsity basketball. Coaches like Charles Henry, Chick Baker, Artie Wilkins, A. Cohen, Leo Youdelman, and Roy Fishkin led HNOH athletes to numerous basketball and baseball championships. The Home served as a farm team for Roosevelt High, where local kids practiced in the Old Gym with its low ceiling, establishing themselves as formidable opponents not only in Westchester County but all of New York State.^{cxlii}

The HNOH teams regularly played and defeated rivals such as Leake & Watts, Hawthorne Cedar Knolls, Pleasantville, Hebrew Orphan Asylum (HOA), Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum (BHOA), and unofficially, Roosevelt High, Yonkers High, Commerce High, Saunders Tech, and many others. Said Sam Arcus, “It was like gunslingers coming from all over to challenge the ‘fastest gun in the West.’ ‘The HNOH varsity is the one to beat!’ is how the Yonkers Herald Statesman put it one day in 1935.”^{cxliii}

The Home on Tuckahoe Road



*The new Home located on Tuckahoe Road.
Courtesy of the HNOH Alumni Association.
A.R. 1919.*

Even after the Home moved to Tuckahoe Road, there were still remnants of the old system. The boys adhered to a regimented schedule. Their days began promptly at 6 am. After making their beds and cleaning up, they marched off to the flag-raising ceremony. Prayers at the synagogue came next, followed by breakfast. Classes filled the day, with lunch in between. Afternoons included more classes, playtime, band practice, and Hebrew school. Evening routines included cleanup, prayers, supper, chores, and extracurricular activities before bedtime.^{cxliv}



Jerry Pincus describe the dormitories as “Army barracks” with perfectly aligned metal frame cots with the diagonal hospital corners at the foot of the mattress. If any bed was poorly made, there was punishment for the boy who slept in it.^{cxlv}

Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing Company.

Sam Arcus reminisced, “Who can forget the large dormitories with the white beds neatly made up by us and evenly lined up row after row. The metal plaques attached to each bed noting its donor, stuck out like grave markers. Oh, how conducive to sleep that was!”^{cxlvi}

Even so, Ira Greenburg explains, “The Home was not Dickensian. Most of us led fairly happy lives. We were busy growing up. We also were kept very busy marching in groups from one event or activity to another, and no matter how bad things got for us, they were made more bearable by our knowing that we were all in this together and the shared misery made the burdens easier for each of us.”^{cxlvii}

Spread across the 20-acre lot were endless trails of wooded hills, forests with the boys’ initials carved into tree trunks, the kitchen yard, the playground, ball fields, orchards, the farm, the chicken coop and the front lawns with their majestic oak and pine trees.^{cxlviii}

Many boys remember the soapstone stoop on the side of the main building. Etched on its surface were the names of boys, chronicled in stone. The boys would sit on the steps and just talk, while enjoying a good view of everything going on around The Home.^{cxlix}



Courtesy of the HNOH Alumni Assoc.

The HNOH facility boasted two gyms, a library, a game room, baseball fields, swings, slides, and small hills for sleighriding where the boys used metal lids from garbage cans as sleds. Across the street, they “belly-whopped” down golf course hills, their bellies serving as sleds. Summers brought outdoor showers. Inside the main building, they had living quarters, an infirmary, music room, workshop, bakery, shoe shop, tailor and seamstress rooms, carpentry shop, aero club room, arts and craft room, photo darkroom, newspaper office, dining rooms, living room, playroom, game room, and library.^{cl}

Of the farm, Jesse Davidson said, “If you ever walked through a field of growing celery and ripening tomatoes fresh with dew, it's another sight and smell you'll never forget.”^{cli} Lew Zedicoff adds, “The old farm gang with the horses, Stockings and Playboy, held many happy moments for us. You can't forget the championship basketball teams and the triumphs in scholastic competition. All that was glorious then was part of the H.N.O.H. spirit, the spirit that still keeps us together.”^{clii}

Excerpts from Chick Baker's poem, “Treasures of Time.”^{cliii}

*Your sympathy is unwarranted
For we have examined life and what's in it,
And we would not trade ours
Not even for a minute.

It is not the victory or the medals
But the long struggling preparations
It is the excitement, the adventurous journey,
That rewards us, not the destination.*

“B. A.” Creek

Across the street from the HNOH was the Grassy Sprain Golf Course, home to “B.A.” creek, a favorite spot where the boys would often sneak over to swim “bare-assed,” much to the dismay of lady golfers and club officials.^{cliv}

Said Bill Weinstein, “‘B.A.’ was nature’s gift to The Home boys. Unimproved, it was a mudhole. Improved, it was our Coney Island.”^{clv}



Courtesy of the HNOH Alumni Assoc.

“Chester Kaplan, aptly nicknamed ‘Cheesie’ due to his sharp senses and ability to detect a ‘rat’ or authority figure, often played the crucial role of ‘laying chickey’ while the boys swam at B.A., raided fruit trees, or other mischief. This task involved standing guard and warning others when an ‘enemy’ approached by shouting ‘Cheese it!,’ causing all the boys to take off running.”^{clvi}

In one instance, police arrived in response to the lady golfers’ complaints. The cops found the boys’ clothing, but never caught the boys, who were already streaking back to The Home, snatching up skunk cabbage leaves to cover themselves while fleeing the scene. These culprits were soon known to everyone at The Home because they all came down with poison ivy, and spent the next week very itchy and covered in calamine lotion.^{clvii}

Sam Prince remembers how the boys would rebuild the stone dam at B.A. every spring, even though they knew it would be dismantled by golf-course employees upon discovery. This was a huge concerted effort that took much planning, with the older boys directing the younger ones in selecting, carrying, and placing the rocks to build up the walls. The teamwork and camaraderie built in this process brought a great sense of accomplishment to all involved in the task.^{clviii}

To be an Orphan

Richie, a small red-headed kid, watched quietly as his mother walked across The Home’s noisy playground and disappeared. Tommy, an older, 11-year-

old kid, quietly observed the situation before introducing himself to Richie, with a comic in hand. “See this Superman? See how he pushes these buildings around? He don’t take crap from no one!” Richie flipped through the comic for a moment before his feelings overcame him. His tears came out in deep, heaving sobs. Tommy just watched and waited. After a few minutes he asked Richie if he liked Superman. “Yes,” said Richie. “Okay,” said Tommy, “If you like Superman, then you oughta know—Superman don’t cry.” Richie looked at his friend Tommy, and almost smiled through his tears. “You’re right, Tommy. Superman don’t cry.”^{clix}

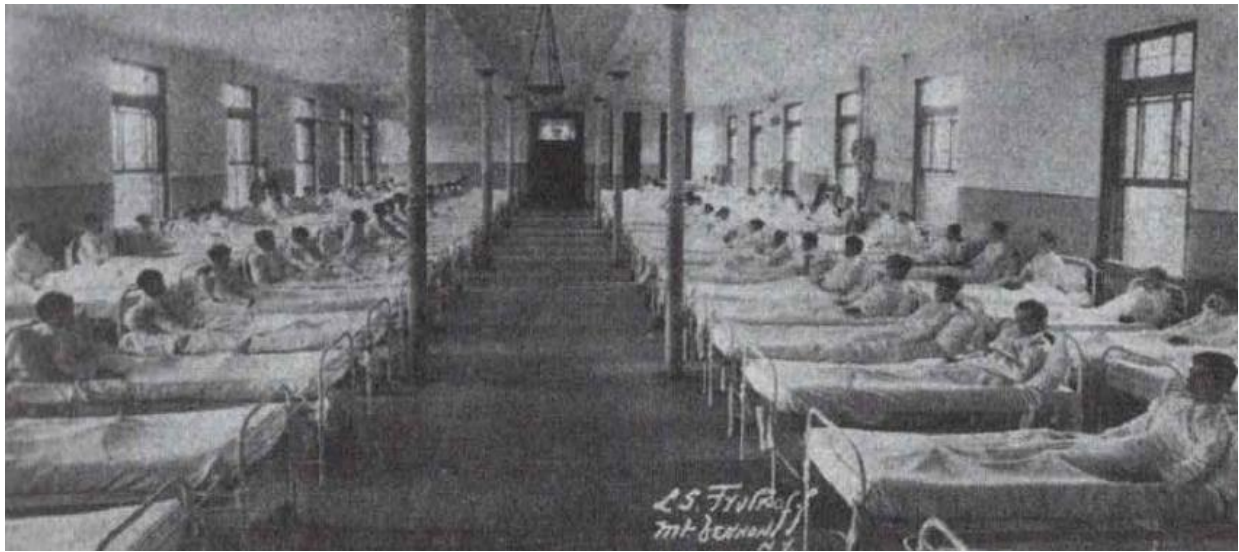
Some children arrived “kicking and screaming,” pleading with their parents not to leave them. Others were in shock or in denial. Some came from the IOA and were already accustomed to life as an orphan. Many were often split apart from their siblings. Girls and very young boys were admitted into the IOA, while the older boys were sent off to the HNOH.^{clx} Eventually though, all adapted to their new life as an orphan.

Unlike other orphanages, there were no formal “adoption days” at the HNOH. Many children had family members living in New York City or New Jersey.^{clxi} Family members could come on “visitor days”^{clxii} and some boys eagerly waited from morning to darkness for relatives to take them away, relatives who never came. They would burst into tears when the supervisor utter those fatal words, “You’d better go back to your dormitory and unpack.”^{clxiii}

Said Richard Safran, “We had no choice in the matter. We were orphans. Our parents had somehow disposed of themselves leaving us to get on as best we could. It was not a simple matter to be thrust at an early age into the bleak indifference of orphanage routine. Still, we survived. We not only survived, we flourished. We became tough and self-sufficient. We didn’t cry when we were hurt and we could, when necessary, be callous and brutal. Ours was a world punctuated by brawls, struggles in the scramble for adolescent prestige, and some fierce hatreds which were just as sustaining as love.”^{clxiv}

“Excelsior,” meaning “onward or upward,” resonated with the boys as they progressed through the different dormitories.^{clxv} The youngest boys resided in the 60-bed dormitory, with 30 white-iron cots lining each wall. Each boy was assigned a number, which was sewn and taped their clothing, bedding, and all their belongings.^{clxvi}

At ten years old, the boys were “promoted” to the 130-bed junior dormitory. The boys would make their beds, tuck in the “hospital corners,” gather their belongings and then march to the junior dorm, where the older boys would sing them a “Hearty Welcome” song. Then they would unpack into their assigned cubicles labeled with their names and numbers.^{clxvii} Said Sam Arcus, “There was something reassuring about seeing our names and numbers on our cubicles, greeting us anew and yet providing a continuity, a perpetuity, a permanence.”^{clxviii}



Junior and senior dorms had 130 beds each. Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing Company.

When a boy reached 14, he would be promoted to the senior dorm, another 130-bed dormitory where the boy would remain until he left The Home, after graduating high school.^{clxix}

Without the presence of family, the boys forged their sense of family and community through their close bonds with their peers. They moved as a unit, marching to and from all their daily activities together—playing, studying,

working, and even occasionally fighting. They shared sweets sent by family members as well as their boyish aspirations of wanting to become firemen, cowboys, and detectives, to later their dreams of becoming engineers, novelists, surgeons, or lawyers.^{clxx}

Fights and Friendships

Of the HNOH, Ira Greenburg explains, “Where boys are gathered together, there will be fights. Where people are gathered together there will be fights. And so it was at The Home. However, there were, surprisingly at first glance, comparatively few fights there, given the size and dynamics of the population. Perhaps this was because we all knew where we stood in the pecking order.”^{clxxi}

Sam Arcus remembers his first fistfight with a boy named Solly Sklar, but admitted it was “more like open-hand slapping on my part. No one, not even my brother Al, a Golden Gloves aspirant, ever taught me about closing my hands into fists, or about conserving my energy rather than flailing away wildly until I exhausted myself. Solly won easily and graciously helped me off the floor. And we became good friends after that.”^{clxxii}

Soon after little Richie arrived at The Home, he was confronted by Barry Berman, an older boy looking for a fight: “You think you’re hot-shit!” he said, glaring at Richie. Richie insisted he wasn’t but Barry kept persisting, drawing closer to Richie. In a panic, and with no time to think, Richie swung a book in his hand and yelled, “No! It’s you that thinks you’re hot-shit!”

The book delivered a solid blow to Barry’s head, flooring him. Stunned, Barry looked up to see Richie flanked by his older roommates, who were now grinning approvingly. Richie and Barry eventually became friends, but for the next year and a half, Barry carried the nickname “Hot-Shit.” This nickname was eventually dropped after Barry defended a smaller Home boy from outsiders at the Wilson Woods swimming pool.^{clxxiii}

L to R and Front to Back Row: Jerry Kresch, Unknown, Chester Kaplan, Sy Lippman, Roy Felder, Max OBshatcko, "Bull" Cohen holding Solley Klein, H. H. Coogan, Phill Pincus, Seymour Biblowitz. Back Row: Aaron Fruchtman (George Fredrics), Meyer Adelman, Sol Shalatsky (Shalat).



Courtesy of The HNOH Alumni Association.

Pranks and Rites-of-Passage

Heshie, a new boy, waited eagerly to eat his dessert: a half a pear with some canned pear juice. He missed dessert the previous day – the bowl was empty by the time it got to him. Heshie was sure it was just a random miscount. However, this time, Heshie noticed that his roommates were each grabbing a pear and a half, grinning as they glanced his way. As the last portion of one-and-a-half pear pieces was being pushed toward “Big Al,” Heshie realized he would never get any dessert unless he took action. Swiftly he picked up the bowl and dumped it all on Big Al’s head. Big Al lunged at him but the boys at the table separated the two until John Cunio, the supervisor, arrived. “Big Al,” he said, smiling, “you have to be more careful with dessert bowls. You know how slippery they get in the hands of new boys who aren’t used to our ways of serving.”^{clxxiv}



The boys’ way of serving was often known as the “deli system” or the “grabby system.” In the deli system, a spoon or fork was spun and the boy at whom it pointed to then decided which direction the food would be passed.^{clxxv}

The dining hall. Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing.

In the grabby system, the strongest boy grabbed as much food as he wanted and then passed the serving dish to his buddy. Either way, if a boy or two were on the wrong end of the starter, the bowls passed to them would be empty, except for a bit that was smeared on the boys' plate to give the impression that food had been eaten. Often, the last two boys would have to fill up on bread and butter to make up for the lack of food.^{clxxvi}

Ernest Levinson shared a favorite prank of the older boys: they would give the new boys an exciting tour of the massive building, showcasing the kitchen, laundry room, hospital, and synagogue. Then came the tour of the spooky basement, which was pitch-black until the tour leaders suddenly switched on their flashlights, revealing empty coffins in the middle of the room. The terrified screams from the younger boys amused the older boys, but gave the poor youngsters nightmares for days after the experience.^{clxxvii}

E. M. "Mickey" Nathanson also recalls the night he and a few older boys decided to swap the beds of Freddy and Willy, the Hilowitz twins. They launched the operation late at night with the plan to convince Willy that he was Freddy and Freddy that he was Willy when they woke up. However, the boys were laughing so hard that they dropped the twins bed mid-swap, waking up the twins. Despite the pranksters' futile attempts to convince them otherwise, the twins knew exactly who was who.^{clxxviii}

Orphan Dogs

The boys adopted many strays that made their way to The Home grounds. Sometimes they were able to hide up to six dogs at a time before the Humane Society came and took them away. These included Beauty, a tiny black and brown Doberman-type canine, and Butch, an athletic golden retriever and German shepherd mongrel who gave the dogcatcher a good run before being carried off in the death van. Rex, was a beautiful, pure German shepherd, who would often steal meat from the kitchen, much to the chagrin of Herman, the fat chef who chased him out with a meat cleaver yelling, "Shtop, shtop him, that's yur zupper!"^{clxxix}

Most legendary of the orphan dogs was Rickey, a small, tan, and fox-like canine who guarded The Home for many years. Emerging from the woods one day, she took charge of the chickens by killing the rats around the coops and barn. This was when Roosevelt's New Deal program on the National Recovery Act (NRA) came out, which the boys surmised to mean, "No Rats Allowed."^{clxxx} Rickey could always identify a Home boy, even far away from The Home. She also always knew when the dogcatchers would be around, and so she was never caught. Rickey was the only dog to get a formal funeral and burial from the boys, complete with front-page placement on the Home's newspaper, *The Homelite*.^{clxxxi}

Quarantine and the Infirmary

Keeping the boys healthy was a constant battle. Boys were quarantined upon arrival at The Home to prevent the spread of any new illnesses. Boys were also quarantined when common childhood illnesses broke out in The Home. Ira Greenburg remembers how the boys had a great time in their quarantined special dormitory while waiting for German measles to take its course. It was not so fun for the monitors who had to keep the quarantined boys in order, and make sure the noise levels were kept down.^{clxxxii}

The boys have fond memories of the wonderful Dr. Gans, who not only served as the family physician for the boys, but also spent hours daily away from his medical practice to act as our athletic director and participate with the boys in games of box-ball and punch-ball.^{clxxxiii}

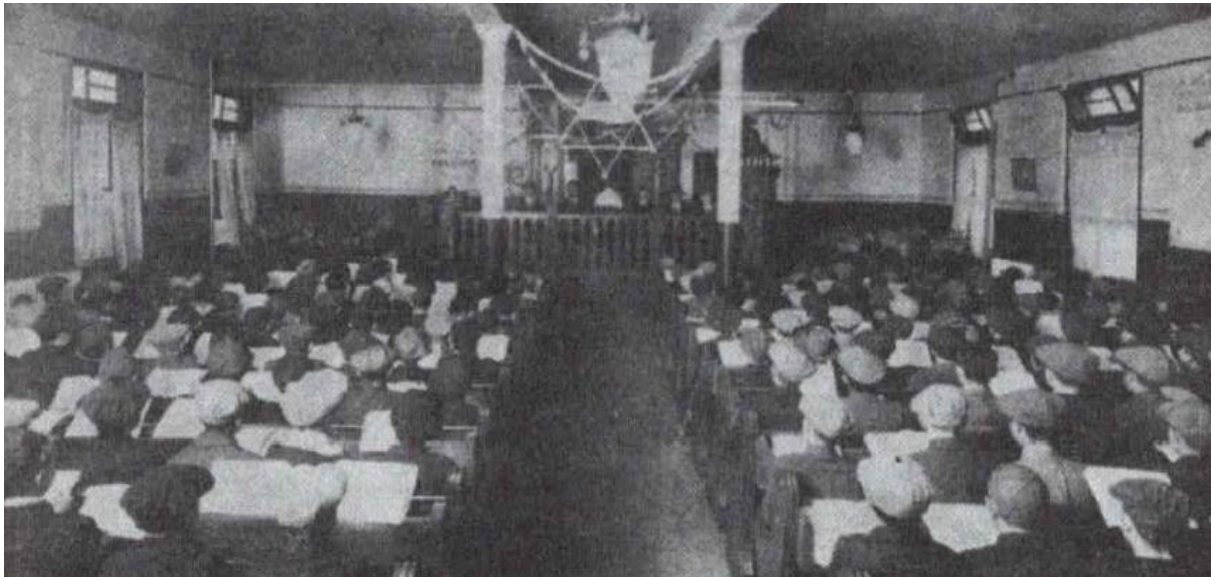
The boys were also close to nurse Augusta Rose Flanagan, known as "Flanny" to the boys, who saw her as a surrogate mother. She made the best Apple Pie from scratch^{clxxxiv} and was really great with the boys. Flanny would arrange for the boys to go to Yonkers for treatment or would call the physicians to The Home when a boy was in an emergency situation.^{clxxxv} *Right photo: Nurse "Flanny" from the H.N.O.H. Alumni Association.*



Religion

The HNOH was an Orthodox Jewish institution, and all boys were required to attend religious services. The daily shachris (morning), minha (afternoon), and mariv (evening) services lasted 15 to 30 minutes long. The boys attended Hebrew classes after school four times a week and Sabbath and holiday services kept the boys praying most mornings and sometimes all day.^{clxxxvi}

Spending Saturday mornings at the Synagogue was especially hard for the boys and it seemed like an eternity before the services were over.^{clxxxvii} Boys caught violating the decorum of the synagogue were disciplined with a sharp slap on the head or more severe punishment afterward.^{clxxxviii}



The synagogue. Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing Group.

To pass time, the boys would secretly catch flies by hand and tie short pieces of thread to the flies' legs before releasing them. In one service, the boys could have 6-8 airborne flies with threads hanging from. It drove the Hebrew teachers crazy and it never occurred to them that whenever there were tethered flies flying around, there was a sudden increase in "Riggy Pops" or devout Hebrew students, going through exaggerated back and forth movements of "davening" and intently reading from their prayer books. Commenting on this many years later, a supervisor said, "It was so much

trouble for these kids to make their beds properly with hospital corners but they can sure tie threads to a fly's leg easy enough!"^{clxxxix}

Although most boys were not devout, Deity-adoring, Orthodox Jews, they did graduate from The Home with the strong foundations of character, including personal integrity, a compulsion to keep their word once given, and a built-in capacity to respect the worth of others.^{cxc} Surprisingly, the two best-liked staff members by all of the boys were Eddie Williams, the night guard, and Mrs. Flanagan, two good Catholics. From their Jewish role models, Rabbi Morris Sandhaus and Mr. Abe Lynam were the boys' favorites. None of children liked Isadore Kaufman, a tall, thin Hebrew teacher who was abusive and seemed perpetually angry.^{cxc}

Rabbi Sandhaus was a short, slim, sandy-haired man, who was liked and respected wherever he went. He had only one weakness, and that was cigarettes. Rabbi Sandhaus would go through four packs (80 cigarettes, unfiltered) each day, except on the Sabbath or religious holiday, when he miraculously had no urge to smoke.^{cxcii} Abe Lyman was witty and personable, with an excellent cantor voice, somewhere between a baritone and a tenor, which was thrilling to hear whenever he would sing. He was a lawyer, advanced Hebrew teacher, ordained rabbi, and, most impressive of all, an amateur boxer.^{cxciii}

The most enjoyable part of being raised as an Orthodox Jew were the holidays and religious celebrations. Lew Zedicoff remembers how relatives would come and visit for the Passover and there were plenty of guests for the seder, with singing, fun and changing of tables.^{cxciv}



*Succoth at The Home, a Jewish autumn festival of Thanksgiving.
Courtesy of The HNOH Alumni Association.*

When the Jewish holidays came around, the hens that didn't lay eggs anymore were pulled from the coops and slaughtered according to Kosher law. These became the Passover and holiday dinners for the boys in the Home.^{cxcv}

The Bar Mitzvahs were always a much-anticipated event for the boys and all who came in attendance. All the ladies' auxiliaries and big private donors attended and there was always entertainment by vaudeville stars currently on Broadway.

Jerry Picnus remembered his Bar Mitzvah in 1937. He and 24 other boys received new suits – not hand-me-downs – and were put on a bus to attend a banquet at the Astor Hotel with live entertainment.^{cxcvi} It was Jerry's first time in the city, and he felt like a tourist, looking at the tall buildings along the Westside Highway or across the Hudson River at New Jersey.^{cxcvii}



Danny Kaye was one of the stars to perform at Jerry's Bar Mitzvah. This talented entertainer became Jerry's favorite and Jerry wept for a long time when Danny Kaye passed away.^{cxcviii}

Danny Kaye. Fekete Erno CC BY

Athletics and Sports



Sports was the big activity in The Home. Stickball, baseball, football, and stoopball ruled outside, while basketball, roller hockey, Johnny-on-the-Pony, and boxing kept the boys busy indoors.

Left Photo: David "Abe" Rubin on the right and an unknown baseball player on the left. A. R. 1924. Photo courtesy of Barbara Rubin Musikar.

The HNOH's sports teams excelled, with many boys playing on high school varsity teams. Among the stars were Ross Green, Ted Greenberg, and Eli Resnick (in basketball) and H. H. Coogan (in long- distance track).^{cxcix}

For many of the boys, athletics became their “true” religion and their coaches, its high priests. The boys pursued perfection like a Holy Grail, finding ecstasy in every perfect somersault, strike-out pitch, and winning basketball game. Coaches like Charles “Chick” Baker and teacher Charles N. Henry instilled ethics, fair play, and perseverance, far beyond what was learned in Hebrew classes. The HNOH jerseys with the Star of David were worn with pride and each win proved their competence and countered the labels given them as by the New York City Social Workers Handbook: “orphans, half-orphans, neglected and destitute children.”^{cc}

A.K. Kersch was one of the longest serving supervisors of the junior dorm, for over five years. From Finland, his athletic prowess introduced soccer to The Home, and he organized successful basketball and baseball leagues, awarded with trophies and medals. Kersch led the Stamp Club, held checkers and chess tournaments, and championed the HNOH school boys race track team. While a force for good, he adhered rigidly to The Colonel's rules.^{cci}

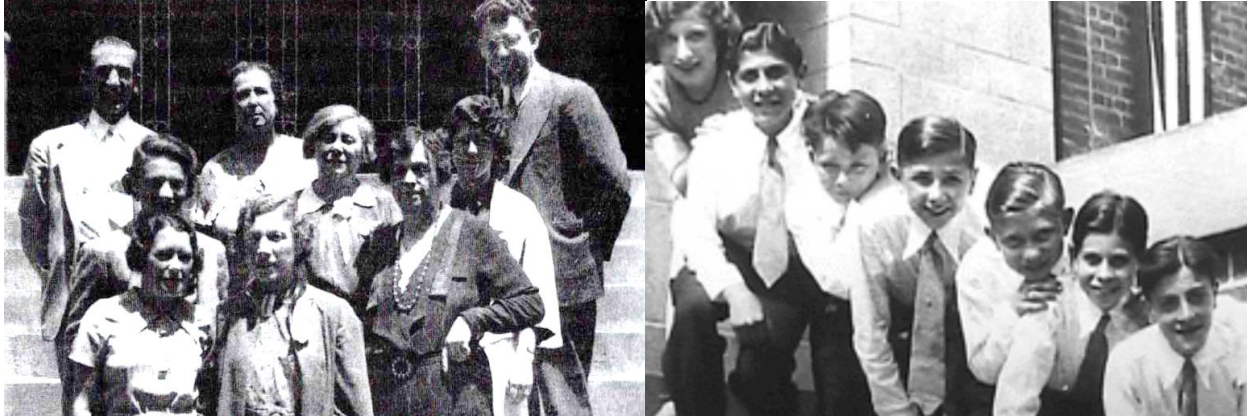
Leo “Young” Youdelman supervised the senior dorm and coached varsity baseball. His baseball prowess was legendary, and it was hinted that he had played in the major leagues. Always kibitzing (wisecracking), Young had a phenomenal memory and could spin jokes for hours. It was rumored that he was hiding out from somebody or something but no one could prove or disprove the allegations. Then one day, he was gone.^{ccii}



Left: 1938 gym class with Harry Lucacher. Right: The 1931 Baseball Team with Coach Lou Cohen. Both photos courtesy of the H.N.O.H. Alumni Association.

The HNOH School and Public Education

Going to public school on the top floor of the building was unique. No busing or walking to school, just a couple of flights of stairs. There was a wonderful staff of teachers, including Mrs. Stebbins, Charles Henry, Mrs. Skinner, Mollie Apter Cahn, and Annie Sutherland, the principal.^{cciii}



Left photo: P.S. 403/404, Manhattan teaching staff in the 1930s. From left, first row: Mrs Skinner, Mrs. Molly-Apter-Cahn, Mrs. Stebbins. Second row: Mrs. Lichtenstadter, Mrs. Mary MacCrostitie, Mrs. Lolly. Third row: Walter Vom Lehn, Mrs. Annie Sutherland, and Charles M. Henry. Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing Group; Right photo: Mollie Kahn-Aptner's class. Courtesy of the H.N.O.H. Alumni Association.

Annie Sutherland was an outstanding principal. A strong woman, she was also known for her ruler strikes, which brought the toughest boys to tears.^{cciv} Mrs. Skinner, a petite woman with coppery red hair, taught second and third grades at P.S. 403, Manhattan. Her quiet authority turned fiery red when the boys misbehaved, earning her the nickname of “Baldy” for pulling out clumps of the boys’ hair in anger. Once order was restored, however, she would resume her lessons in her clear, soft voice, and good learning took place.^{ccv}

Ira Greenburg attributes much of his success to Mrs. Skinner. When he arrived to her class, he was illiterate. Mrs. Skinner held him back in third grade, promising to teach him reading and writing so that he could rejoin his classmates by the following year. Though initially doubtful, a year later, sure enough, Ira was back with his class. Mrs. Skinner not only helped him

improve his skills, he became a voracious reader. This love for reading led him to a B.A. in journalism, an M.A. in English, an M.S. in counseling, and a Ph.D. in psychology. Ira's career spanned ten years in journalism and thirty years as a clinical psychologist.^{ccvi}

A ten-minute walk east from The Home brought the boys to Theodore Roosevelt High School, where Luther Van Anden, a lean and ascetic looking math teacher, taught the boys and encouraged them to debate various issues. Ira Greenburg remembers the first day of class, where Mr. Van Anden welcomed the class, and in the next breath tore into them as lazy, irresponsible, privileged leeches on society. This shocked many of the boys. However, they soon began talking back, defending themselves, and occasionally attacking Mr. Van Anden in the process. Mr. Van Anden took it well, as he won many of the arguments, and then would spend the rest of the period teaching algebra. The boys, even the silent ones, always learned a lot from Mr. Van Anden's classes.^{ccvii}

Many HNOH boys would sneak under the fences at Roosevelt High School to avoid the 50-cent admission fee to watch high school football and baseball games.^{ccviii} Bill Weinstein remembers how the boys would try to blend in with the crowd of students near Oolala's hot dog and ice cream wagon. Bill's gaze often lingered on the high school students enjoying hot dogs and sodas. The couples holding hands fascinated him—the boys in loafers with shiny copper pennies on their shoes, sporting tweed and camel-hair jackets, and the girls with long blond hair, colorful sweaters, and skirts that revealed shapely legs. Watching them made Bill wonder how he would be received when he entered Roosevelt High.^{ccix}

Outings, Events, and Movies

Of the outings the boys got to participate in, Irving Tarr said, "It was a real treat to go to Tuckahoe or Yonkers to see a first run movie, or the circus. Sleigh riding down our own ski slopes on barrel staves, fireworks every Fourth of July, candy every Friday brought in by ladies of various auxiliaries,

those baseball and basketball games starring our own Lou Resnick (the Mickey Mantle of our day), and many, many other events.”^{ccx}

The Home often held high school dances in the gym or the second-floor game room with girls from the local towns. The boys would decorate the area and dress in their best clothing.

Ernest Levinson recalls, “Some of the girls were real knockouts.” He had a secret crush on one girl who looked like Vivien Leigh. Although nothing serious developed between most of the couples, the boys would brag about “how far” they got with the girls.^{ccxi}



Photo, right: Vivien Leigh from “Gone with the Wind.” Courtesy of Wikipedia.



Jules Turoff shared his memories of going to the movies: “Through the graciousness of the owners we were permitted to attend the ‘Orpheum Theatre’ on Second Avenue at least once a week. I will always remember the anticipation of seeing the thrillers, ‘The Lost City,’ ‘Tarzan’ with Elmo Lincoln and of course, Pearl White. For an added treat, we were given a weekly allowance of one cent to buy jelly beans or gum drops.”^{ccxii}

The Orpheum Theatre on Second Avenue featuring a Yiddish musical comedy starring the incomparable Molly Picon. Courtesy of Cinematreaasures.org

Every Wednesday night, movies were shown in the New Gym, featuring serial adventures of Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon, Fu Manchu, Tom Mix, Tarzan, Trader Horn, Our Gang, and plenty of Shirley Temple films. When an Errol Flynn swashbuckler played, the next day saw freshmen and juniors dueling with makeshift swords from orange crate slats. All the boys wanted

to be like Andy Hardy, as portrayed by Mickey Rooney, believing this was the real America: happy, energetic high schoolers from idealized, upper-income two-parent homes.^{ccxiii}

Summer Days

The HNOH boys used to spend every summer at the Rockaways, staying in a former hotel at Arverne, a clubhouse of the Atlantic Athletic Association with a huge gym as a dormitory, and in a “tent camp” by the Hammels station tracks, where they were lulled to sleep by the sounds of trains going in and out of the station.



Photo, right: Summer at the Rockaways. Courtesy of the H.N.O.H. Alumni Assoc.



Said Morris Halpern, “Those were the days of joyous beach parties with hotdogs and soda, and great baseball teams with Max Resnick pitching and Harry Beeres stealing bases. We made an envious record all over the Rockaways.”^{ccxiv} Ernest Levinson adds, “Also, there were trips to the circus, major league baseball games, and the amusement park at Far Rockaway Beach.”^{ccxv}

Summer in 1935. Courtesy of The H.N.O.H. Alumni Association.

Erwin “Mickey” Nathanson fondly remembers Dave Konigsberg, a librarian and a supervisor for The Home, who would often lend nickels and dimes

for treats in 'The Home's candy store or in 'Tuckahoe. Dave would take the boys to a diner for treats like pie-a-la-mode or rice pudding with chocolate ice cream. Although some money was repaid from allowances or gifts, many nickels and dimes remained unpaid.^{ccxvi}

The annual trip to Playland at Rye Beach were the highlights of Bill Weinstein's summers. The HNOH boys would board the bus with bathing suits neatly rolled in towels. Supervisors would remind them of the buddy system before sending them off to enjoy the amusement park and pool. Freshmen had chaperones, but juniors and seniors were on their own. The older boys all took pride in maintaining the good behavior that was expected of them.^{ccxvii}

Chores and the School Works Program

Under Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Projects Administration (WPA), Harry Lucacher assigned boys to the School Work Program. In this government-sponsored program, high school students could earn \$6 a month for various chores done at the Home, including cleaning chicken coops and barns. Harry hired an old-time farmer to oversee production. The "Farm Gang" worked the land, and thanks to Harry's encouragement, two boys joined the Pennsylvania Farm School in Doylestown, becoming successful agriculturists.^{ccxviii}

Boys from the junior dorm weeded, picked fruits and vegetables, and loaded wagons. Senior boys boxed the produce. They also maintained the chicken coop, collected eggs, and shoveled snow. Some senior boys, with a hint of authority, could be mischievous—putting eggs in the pockets of unsuspecting boys and smashing them, tripping others, or tossing chickens. Barn duty involved caring for Blacky and Whitey (two horses), hitching wagons, and performing winter tasks like clearing roads.^{ccxix}

Boys also worked in the shoe shop, the tailor shop, and the laundry room. There were also jobs as busboy and waiter in the dining room. Older boys

often got paid to lead club activities, serve as monitors in the freshman dormitory, and were even hired on as supervisors after graduation.^{ccxx}

Work duties in the kitchen included setting and cleaning tables, serving food, cleaning the dining area, washing dishes, preparing sandwiches for school lunches, and prepping for upcoming meals. Boys on kitchen duty only got paid 50 cents working the entire weekend as a dishwasher. With 300 boys and four dishes per boy per meal, plus silverware, it was a lot of hard work for little pay.^{ccxxi} However, there was a really nice compensation that came with this job - the boys could swipe extra food when they cleaned out the leftovers in the big pots and cookware.^{ccxxii}

During his junior years, Jerry Pincus, along with Jerry “Romy” Hershkowitz and Jerry Coogan—collectively known as the three Jerrys—hatched a plan to make extra money by selling root beer. They acquired root-beer powder and filled a dozen one-gallon bottles to the brim, storing them in the junior dorm storeroom. Two weeks later, at 4 A.M., disaster struck. The bottles exploded due to fermentation and lack of headspace in the bottles, sending glass and foul-smelling liquid everywhere. It was a very messy sight and all the other boys were angry at the three Jerrys for ruining their clothes and personal possessions.^{ccxxiii}

The Aviation Club

Because of the boys’ interest in “aeroplanes,” one of the guidance counselors, Jack Patent, formed an aviation club for the boys to learn more through building and flying model airplanes. For the boys, it provided a welcome escape from the daily institutional routine. Generous contributions from Board of Directors members funded the club’s activities, granting access to an aeronautical library, aviation magazines, and publicity releases from emerging airlines. These exciting times marked the transition from familiar biplanes to monoplanes, which carried both passengers and mail—a progress fueled by Lindbergh’s solo trans-Atlantic flight.^{ccxxiv}

Jesse Davidson, who later became a pilot, recalls “none of us youngsters had ever seen a REAL airplane on the ground ...and like the rest of the club members, I had the feverish desire to see one, touch it, admire it, and even sit in the cockpit. It became an obsession, and if I had to do something to realize this ambition, then I would do it and take the consequences.”^{CCXXV}

And so he did. On one mid-summer Sunday during visiting hours, he snuck off the premises with another Home boy, to hike for miles on foot from Yonkers to New Rochelle, where there was a “landing field.”

They found a deserted field with a magnificent aircraft, an Eaglerock, nestled between the trees. For hours the boys waited for the owner to appear, taking in the sights and smells of the leather padding, the freshly doped and painted surfaces of the newly-manufactured aircraft.



Photo: an Alexander Eaglerock Bullet Airplane in the 1930s. Courtesy of Wikipedia

They even climbed into the cockpit and took pictures for “the boys back home.” It was nightfall by the time they returned back on campus. Even though the boys were disciplined, the following week, with the blessing of the Club Director, 25 members of the club, plus a few soon-to-be members, hiked to the field to see the Alexander Eaglerock Bullet landing and taking off with sight-seeing passengers.^{CCXXVI}

Wolverine Rod and Gun Club

Seymore “Iggy” Wallens fondly remembers roaming the wilderness with friends and trapping fur-bearing animals for a few dollars. The boys often got into a lot of trouble, but Harry Lucacher always seemed to smoothed things over and make things right. When an outsider trapped a fox behind the Home, the boys found it and kept it as a pet. The trapper threatened

arrest, but Harry intervened, and peacefully resolved the situation, ensuring that there was no police record for the boys.^{ccxxvii}

Iggy also raised pigeons on the barn roof, but a complaint to the police led to the boys' BB gun being taken away by Red Hart, a strict game warden with a vendetta. Iggy sought the help from wrestler Jack Bennett, but Jack's intervention, a swift punch to Red's eye, only escalated the situation. Once again, Harry quickly stepped in and made things right with Red Hart and the police.^{ccxxviii}

Bill Weinstein, also a member of the Rod and Gun Club, remembers going to the NYC fur district, armed with pelts to sell. Bill faced several disinterested store owners. However, one man, who happened to be a Big Brother for The Home, carefully examined the furs and asked Bill how much he wanted for the pelts. Bill identified each fur by size with the values listed in the price list. The furrier went back to his office and surprised Bill by writing out a check for the full price asked.^{ccxxix}

The Homelite



HNOH boys in one of the HNOH's photography dark rooms. Courtesy of the Herald Statesman. May 6, 1940.

The Homelite office, filled with mimeograph ink, typewriter ribbons, and correction fluid, was a creative sanctuary for Erwin "Mickey" Nathanson, author of "The Dirty Dozen."

Mickey began as a junior reporter, working under legendary editors, such as Ira Greenberg, Murray Feierberg, Sam Arcus, Lew Zedicoff, and Danny Lovett.. The Homelite office was charming, with old desks, typewriters, and bookshelves, making the office a cozy place to do homework and hang out

with friends. Later in life, Mickey would pattern every workroom after 'The Homelite office. He remarked, "Over the decades, it has seemed to me that everything I did later in newspapers, magazines, and books grew out of writing for and editing the monthly newspaper we put out."^{ccxxx}

The HNOH Band

Of the band, Charlie Vladimar exclaimed, "What can be more exciting for a child than to watch a parade, listen to the clamor of the bands and look at the spectacle of marching bands in colorful uniforms!"^{ccxxxi} Ira Greenburg also agreed, stating, "when we played in public, we were impressive. We wore modern military-type band uniforms and Major Zundel wore an Army cavalry Class A uniform."^{ccxxxii}



The HNOH Band in 1932. Courtesy of the H.N.O.H. Alumni Association.

Even though the boys had several wonderful bandmasters, including Mr. Teitler and Mr. Ferber, Major Gregor Zundel was the most memorable of them all. Prior to serving as bandmaster for 'The Home in the 1930s, Major Zundel was the bandmaster of the Czar's Imperial Orchestra and the West Point band at the U.S. Military Academy.^{ccxxxiii}

Major Zundel was short in stature, with a thin moustache. Always recruiting boys for the band, his favorite joke was to single out a boy and tell him, “You should be in ze band; you have ze good lips—for ze drum.”^{ccxxxiv} The Major was also comical in his attempts to impress women, and seemed undeterred by their constant rejections of him. Nonetheless, he was a great bandmaster, and several boys pursued professional careers in music because of him.^{ccxxxv}

Charlie Vladimar, like many of the boys, joined the band because the uniforms made him feel important. He remembers how he would proudly wear his band uniform while visiting his mother in the sanatorium, telling her friends that he was on leave from a military school in Westchester. Many of the band boys told similar stories.^{ccxxxvi}



Courtesy of the H.N.O.H. Alumni Association

Band trips also gave the boys many new experiences, including the chance to see different places and to eat good food. Most band trips were for parades, such as the Fireman’s Parade, which was attended by the whole city of Yonkers. Charlie remembers eating ham sandwiches (luckily there were no Hebrew staff around) and drinking a cold beer because there were no soft drinks available. A nice, cold beer became Charlie’s favorite thirst quencher on hot days and he would always get nostalgic whenever hearing a band performing "Stars and Stripes" or "The Washington Post March" at a parade or on TV.^{ccxxxvii}

World War II

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 change the lives of the boys in many ways.^{ccxxxviii} Frank Goldwitz had photos of Schofield Barracks

taken by his brother during the Pearl Harbor attack. The boys alerted the Yonkers Herald-Statesman about the scoop and the paper published some of the photos, which created a buzz in the community.^{ccxxxix}

Simon Growick knew he might have to join the Armed Forces if the war lasted long enough. One Wednesday night at the movies, a reel about a Navy Pharmacist Mate examining slides from a microscope sparked his interest. As a senior at Roosevelt High, he doubled up on courses to enlist sooner. Simon soon joined the Navy, attended Hospital Corps School, and began his career in health care.^{ccxli}

Over the course of the War, many of The Home boys were enlisted and stationed all over the world. This included Ira Greenberg and Murray Feierberg, who were enlisted in the Army a year after graduating high school. Both were a long way from The Home, living each day in peril, but they still kept in touch by mail.^{ccxlii} So did Lou Zedicoff, who wrote memorable letters and articles in the Alumnus on the progress of the HNOH graduates serving in the War.^{ccxliii}



Boys relaxing in their newly renovated rooms, shortly before the war started.

The boys at The Home would often read mail from the HNOH graduates who were serving in the war.

Courtesy of the Herald Statesman. May 6, 1940.

After the War ended, the boys mourned their losses: Seymour Kasonsky, the summer trumpeter, died after D-Day; Arthur “Spike” Schiller, the cheerful basketball player, perished in the English Channel; Henry Josephberg, the popular athlete, was killed in the Battle of the Bulge; and Marty Miller, the saxophonist, was severely wounded.^{ccxliiii}

The Boys After the HNOH

Harry Lucacher paved the way for the boys to lead successful and fulfilling lives after leaving The Home. From the poor and destitute orphans who were leaving The Home with little to no education, to young men who not only completed high school but also pursued higher education. These boys served in the War and became writers, healthcare professionals, lawyers, and other honorable professions. They built their own families while always maintaining a strong bond with their fellow HNOH brothers.

Excerpt From the 1978 Annual Reunion and Installation^{ccxliv}

It seems so long ago since we were the orphaned, the displaced and troubled---for it was long ago we arrived at man's estate. Many have prospered; have entered diverse fields of endeavor; have reared offspring of whom they may be proud.

We give thanks for a heritage of our Judaic and American ethics and morality. Our hearts go out to the many wonderful philanthropic individuals---numerous Leagues, Auxiliaries, Medical and Dental Societies and Big Brothers who made all this possible and wish them joy in their golden years.

Charles “Chick” Baker was inspired by Harry Lucacher’s example and went into the field of institutional child care and teaching.^{ccxlv}

Simon Growick spent a lot of time in the infirmary helping Nurse Flanny and was fascinated with watching the doctor suture cut injuries and remove BB’s from the scalp. This inspired him to pursue a career in healthcare.^{ccxlv}

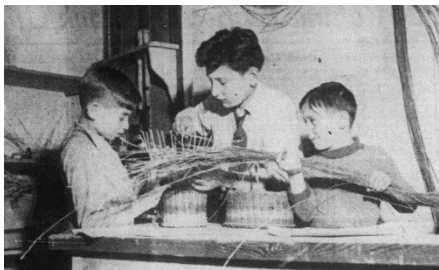
Many of The Homelite boys went on into successful careers in related fields. Ira Greenburg received his B.A. in Journalism and served for ten years as a newspaper reporter at the Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer, the Louisville Courier-Journal, and the Los Angeles Times.^{ccxlvii} Ira later went on to graduate school and became a Ph.D. psychologist.^{ccxlviii} Murray Feierberg became a photographer for Women’s Wear Daily and head of the paper’s photo lab until he retired.^{ccxlix}

The Home's most famous alumnus was Erwin "Mickey" Nathanson, author of the best-seller novel, *The Dirty Dozen*, which became a blockbuster movie and later developed into a television series. Mickey went on to write many more books since then.^{ccl}

Many band boys went on to become successful musicians. Jerry Boison became a music teacher at Boston's prestigious Latin High School and conducted the All-City High School Orchestra, appearing on local TV. Bill Schneiderman joined the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Walter Lewis played clarinet in top Broadway musicals. Milt Raynor (Resnick) played trumpet with the Vincent Lopez Band and other Big Bands and Harry Kern (Mendelkern) became a professional drummer in New Orleans.^{ccli}

Bill Weinstein became the New York City wrestling champion in his weight division on a collegiate level and then went on to become a successful insurance underwriter.^{cclii}

Honorable Martin P. Miller, who assumed the judgeship at the age of 31 in Colorado, became the youngest state district judge throughout the nation and later became a candidate for the office of United States senator.^{ccliii}



Sam Arcus began as the Arts and Crafts instructor at The Home. As he pursued higher education, he advanced to club leader, unit head, department head, program director, and eventually executive director of Jewish community centers nationwide.^{ccliv}

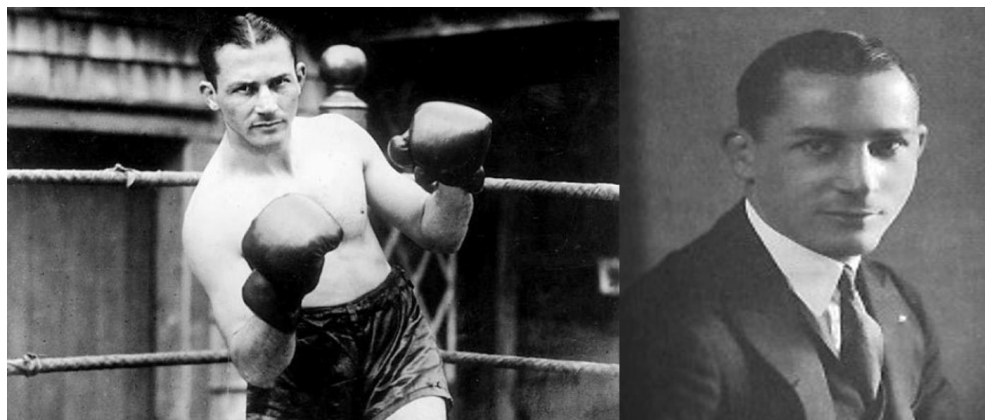
*HNOH boys weaving baskets for Arts & Crafts.
Courtesy of the Herald Statesman. May 6, 1940*

Thanks to a scholarship from The Home, Sam earned a Master of Social Work degree, enabling him to enter professional social work and continue the work of helping families and their children.^{cclv}

Part IV: Friends and Supporters

Benny Leonard: Lightweight Boxing Champion

Benny Leonard, born Benjamin Leiner (April 7, 1896 – April 18, 1947), was a Jewish-American professional lightweight boxing champion.



Benny was considered one of Top 10 Boxers of all time and in all weight classes. He was ranked as the #1 Best Lightweight fighter and held the world lightweight championship title for eight years. In his professional career from 1911-1932, he won 185 out of 221 boxing matches.

Benny fought at Madison Square Garden and also in Yankee Stadium before some of the largest crowds of his time. He was a hero of the Lower East Side and a good friend of Harry Lucacher. Benny would often visit the boys at the HNOH.



*Benny Leonard, Harry Lucacher,
and the Boys of the Hebrew
National Orphan Home*

The Wonderful Women Supporting the HNOH

Society Women and Charities

In the 1840s, German Jews came to the US and by the 1920s, they were secure members of the upper class. Many of them lived in Upper Manhattan and were not permitted to work in the business world. Instead, many of these educated and wealthy women dedicated their time, talents, and financial means to running charities and fundraising.

These women were lovely, hard-working organizers of the auxiliaries—many of them, for more than twenty to thirty years. The HNOH would not have existed without these wonderful women. They are the unsung heroes of this story and this section is dedicated to them.

“Through the days of the Great Depression and through the war years of World War II and Korea, and afterwards, they were with us. They cared for us, and they supported us, both through fund-raising and personal interventions. ...They were there for us in our hours of need, and we give thanks and honor to them.” ^{cclvi}

Ladies' Auxiliaries and the HNOH

The HNOH did not get any Federal, State, or Municipal money. Every single penny came from donations. Harry was hired as the Business Manager soon after 1920, when the HNOH moved to Yonkers. By 1922, the ladies' auxiliaries began raising money for the children. Harry's job was to coordinate the numerous Ladies' Auxiliaries and Leagues and bring in the money needed to keep the HNOH running.

At any one time, there were about 7,000 members in over 40 organizations that supported the HNOH. This is based on a review of over 1,300 newspaper articles that were printed in New York newspapers between the 1920s and the 1940s.

Fundraising Events

Every week, there were various newspaper announcements from these ladies' auxiliaries. These ladies put on their finest dresses and hosted extravagant luncheons, selling \$10-a-plate meals,^{cclvii} which is equivalent to \$100-per-plate meals in the 21st century.



Harry spoke at luncheons to encourage donations and often brought in young orphans to participate. Gustave Sprinsock (above) is thanking the benefactors at a luncheon put on by the Rockaway League in the Astor Hotel in 1949. Seated beside him are Justice Benjamin Shalleck and Mrs. Samuel Goldbaum, chairman of the luncheon committee.

Courtesy of the New York Times.

These luncheons were often held at the Astor Hotel, Madison Square Gardens, New York City theaters and armories, and other prominent locations. These were grand affairs with featured guest speakers, fashion shows, musical entertainment, public officials, and card games, such as bridge and canasta.

The money from these events paid for the medical services, food, clothing, facilities, activities, and education for the 400 boys at the HNOH. They provided presents and gifts to the boys and also celebrated every boy's birthday, bar mitzvah, and graduation. No other New York Jewish orphanage had such a strong, supportive fundraising base.



From annual balls at the Armory (1933) to costume barn dances (1937), the women of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Medical and Dental Service opened their hearts and purses to help the care for the boys of The Home. Courtesy of the Herald Statesman.

One of the most anticipated events include the Bar Mitzvahs of young boys as they reached the significant ages of 12 or 13. These events were often hosted at the Astor Hotel or the Park Avenue Hotel^{cclviii} where donors and philanthropists, dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns were treated to exquisite meals and entertained by prominent Jewish artists and the HNOH band. Attendees paid \$25 per ticket, or \$250 per ticket in modern times,^{cclix} and each attendee was expected to pledge a large contribution for the boys' support.

The boys' parents were also invited to witness the ceremonies from a balcony above the ballroom, much to the pride of the young boys.^{cclx}

Notably, three of the Bar Mitzvah boys would deliver speeches in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew, much to the “qvells and delights of the audience.” The young Bar Mitzvah recipients were not only presented with gifts but also an 18K gold ring engraved with their initials—a cherished tradition indeed.^{cclxi}



The 1937 Bar Mitzvah class. First row, from left to right, Lou Shapiro, David Horn, Charles Vogel (who delivered the Yiddish speech), Ira Greenberg (who delivered the English speech), Sol Sorkin, Jerry Pincus, Sol Klein, Sidney Boison, Murray Feierberg, and Bob Wolpert. Second row, left to right, Jerry Kresch, Henry Josephberg, David Sewell, David Kahn, Ralph Lipshitz, Danny Rosenbloom, Walter Kuperinsky (who delivered the Hebrew speech), Morris Bond, and Seymour Lippman.

In addition to these trips to different locations around New York, the boys looked forward, with great anticipation, to visits from the Ladies’ Auxiliaries to The Home. Candy was brought in every Friday by women from various auxiliaries^{cclxii} and card party luncheons were often held at The Home to raise money for the boys.

Luncheons at the HNOH

The luncheons at the HNOH provided many of the women with their first opportunity to meet the children they were raising money for. For some of

the women, it was their first time to meet the boys. Jerry Pincus, alumni of the HNOH, recalls those visits:

‘Naturally, the day they came we had to clean the grounds and dorms with extra care. We were given clean clothes to wear and were lined up in the Old Gym and given cookies and ice cream. We put on quite a show so that the ladies would see that we were being treated well and raised as Jewish Orthodox boys.’^{xclxiii}

Another alumni, Sam Meyers, remembers how much the boys treasured these visits and how it made them yearn for the women in their own families:

‘What beautiful women they were! I remember one that looked so much like my Aunt Fanny and I must admit to staring badly. I know there were others who found someone who looked like Mom, Aunt, Grandmother, Sister? Just looking occasionally at the kids, I could see what they too were feeling.’^{xclxiv}

The boys knew that the visits meant food, wonderful cakes with frosting, gifts, hugs, and the love that they so desperately craved.

The HNOH band would often play for the women in the adjoining playroom to provide background music for the women while they played cards and ate. The boys played marches, waltzes by Leher or Strauss, and some of the boys would stand out by performing solos.^{cclxv}



The HNOH Band in 1941. Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing Group.

The women would eat in the dining room while the boys ate in the Gymnasium. The sounds of the women upstairs in the dining room playing bridge and having a wonderful time was music to the boys' ears while they ate in the Gymnasium, where large pots of food and delectable desserts were carried around to serve the boys. Each boy received a small, treasured gift. This was usually a toy or nature series cards that they would play with and swap with other boys for weeks on end.^{cclxvi}

The boy waiters upstairs were the lucky ones—not only did they get to clear the tables and keep the decks of cards the women played with, but they also received personal attention and generous tips:

"We set the table and prettied everything up ...I remember the speeches and the envelopes, those mysterious envelopes and the smiles and happy talk that went with them. Occasionally, I heard about the volunteer Dentists who would be looking after MY TEETH! I know they were the Dentists' wives reporting all this. Yeah, and optometrists and glasses at no charge. Oh, the satisfying looks of these handsome women as they told of what we might expect...After dinner each of us waiters, received generous tips for waiting on the tables. I can get that chromatic harmonica I have been wanting for so long."^{xcxcvii}

After eating, the women would walk around the grounds talking to the boys, giving them hugs, and being very generous with monetary gifts. One of these lovely ladies was Ethel Merman, a young starlet of German descent with a powerful, brassy voice.

Although known for her Broadway performances in *Gypsy*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *Annie Get Your Gun* and her signature song, "There's No Business Like Show Business"—Ethel Merman also played an active role in The Home's fundraising efforts.

(Ethel Merman, 1934. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures)



At one event, the boys remember Ethel Merman gifting a boy with a beautiful shiny bike, with lots of chrome and balloon tires. This bike was cherished and shared with all the other boys in The Home for many years following the event.^{cclxviii}

Ethel Merman and countless other women, many unrecognized, dedicated their time and means to advocate for the boys' welfare and ensure the success of the various auxiliaries supporting the HNOH. Among the numerous auxiliaries, two groups—The Brooklyn League and the Medical and Dental Auxiliary—seemed to do most of the heavy lifting.

The Brooklyn League

The Brooklyn League were master fundraisers, raising more than half of the funds used for the upkeep and maintenance of The Home.^{cclxix}



Officers of the Brooklyn League in 1933. Seated in the center is Rabbi Harry Halpern with Mrs. P. Hirsch, president of the Brooklyn League seated on the right, next to him. Courtesy of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle.



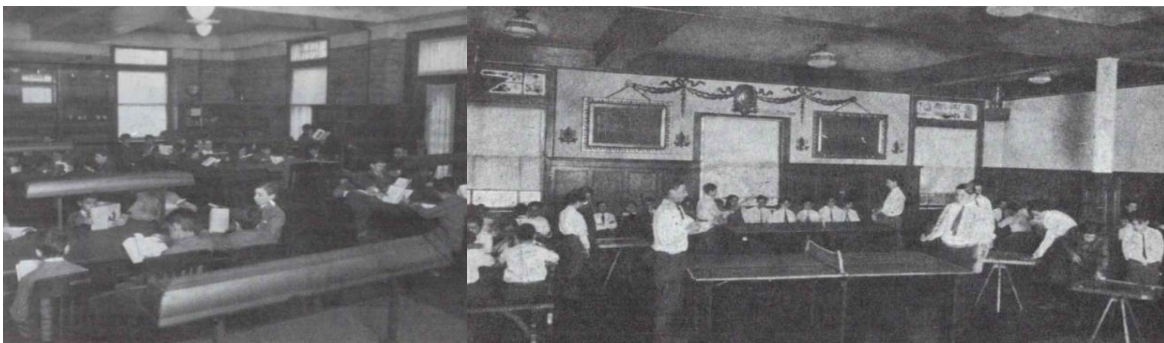
Lead by Mrs. Pauline Hirsch for over 25 years, who was president since the league's inception,^{cclxx} the Brooklyn League successfully raised funds despite economic depression and the HNOH's imminent closure.

In the picture on the left (1936), is Mrs. Pauline Hirsh and Boro President Robert Ingersoll, who purchased the first \$1 membership in a national campaign that successfully raised over \$100,000—thus preventing The Home from shuttering its doors.

(Courtesy of The Brooklyn Times Union)

With a membership of 900 members,^{cclxxi} the Brooklyn League ran various luncheons, banquets, bazaars, and balls to raise money to install a kitchen, freezers, library, workshop, gymnasium, handball courts, swings, and many other improvements to the orphanage.

For example, in 1926, a new library for the boys was opened after an \$8,000 donation from the Brooklyn League.^{cclxxii} And in 1930, the league raised over \$12,000 to open a new modern kitchen, complete with refrigerating rooms and ovens.^{cclxxiii}



The Library & Game Room. Courtesy of Greenwood Publishing Group. A.R. 1932.

The Ladies' Auxiliary of the Free Medical and Dental Service



The Ladies' Auxiliary of the Free Medical and Dental Service of the HNOH in 1931, in its 7th year of operation. Courtesy of The Yonkers Statesman.

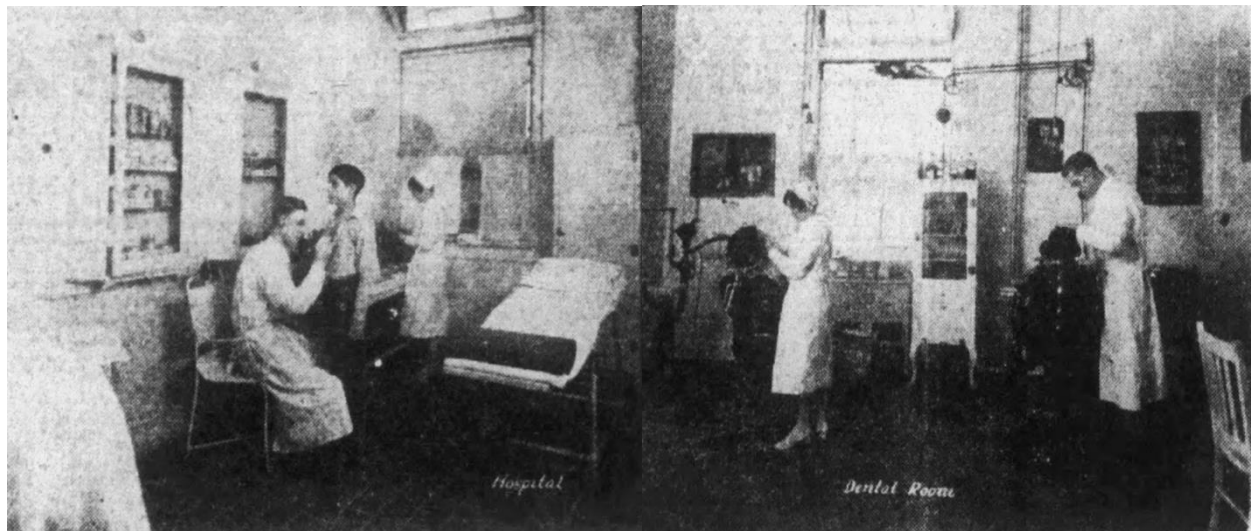
Over sixty physicians and dentists volunteered their time and expertise to run the Free Medical and Dental Services of the HNOH. This group of medical professionals ensured the well-being of 350-400 orphans annually, handling 800 dispensary and 80 hospital cases each year.^{cclxxiv} This brought the cost of care down to just \$7 per child per year—or \$80,000 in total per year—and even this cost was all generously covered by the group.^{cclxxv}

In the Home's dispensary, the organization ensured that there was a resident nurse on duty round the clock and at least one doctor on site daily. Specialized staff members conduct minor surgical procedures under the physician's direction.^{cclxxvi}

In 1937, this team of doctors played an integral role in containing a scarlet fever outbreak that spread like wildfire in The Home, causing it to undergo a self-imposed quarantine that barred the movement of most personnel in and out of The Home. Thanks to the round-the-clock vigilance of this volunteer medical staff, the affected boys were properly attended to and the disease was effectively managed.^{cclxxvii}

The HNOH's dental services was also highly praised by Health Commissioner Buckmaster, who stated:

"The care given the teeth of those children far surpasses that of any other group anywhere. A dental hygienist is in attendance at the clinic, cleaning the children's teeth at regular intervals, supervising their dental hygiene, and assisting the dentists in their work. Since its organization, the dental staff has [completed] 4,300 cleanings, 3,000 fillings, 1,500 extractions, also a number of regulating cases, restoration cases, and considerable X-ray work."^{cclxxviii}



The Medical & Dental Clinic in 1931. Courtesy of The Yonkers Herald.

The women, who were often the wives of the medical and dental team, were at the heart of the Free Medical and Dental Services. These ladies ran many events and benefits to support The Home. They held card luncheons, theater parties, raffles, rummage sales, and solicited for donations. Some would even stand on street corners and ask passersbys for money “for the poor Jewish orphan children.”^{cclxxix}

The money that these women raised provided the hospital department with medical and dental equipment and supplies, linens, and the funds to pay for hospital bills, nurses' salaries, and social welfare activities.

Not only did these women provide for the physical health of the children, they had a mantra to do “everything within their means to brighten the lives of the children.”^{cclxxx} They wanted the children to feel loved. This included

arranging special parties, taking boys to the movies, buying toys and games for the playroom, and endowing graduates with gifts and clothing.

In spite of the trying times, the women in the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Medical and Dental Clinic always held elaborate birthday parties each month, with beautifully decorated tables, delicious meals, and appetizing desserts that included cakes, ice cream, apples, and candy. All of the food was covered by the auxiliary's funds.^{cclxxxi}

Additionally, in an effort to make the birthday celebrations more “real,” the women made it a point not to give practical gifts that the children needed, but rather gifts that the boys wanted. Each month for many years, these women generously paid for the “piles of birthday gifts” out of their own pockets.^{cclxxxii} These were just some examples of the many ways that these kind and wonderful ways that the women expressed their love for the boys at the HNOH.

The Israel Orphan Asylum (IOA)



*Gustave Hartman,
founder of the Israel
Orphan Asylum (IOA)*

Gustave Hartman served as a judge in the New York City courts from 1913 until 1929. In 1914, Judge Hartman founded the Israel Orphan Asylum (IOA), which he ran until his death in 1936, at age 56.

Hartman financed the IOA out of his own pocket and through aggressive fund-raising.

The Jewish immigrants lived in overcrowded, substandard housing, worked long hours in unhealthy sweatshops, and barely earned enough to provide food, clothing and shelter for their families. Death took an alarming toll on the immigrant parents. They were victims of many diseases, especially tuberculosis, accidents, child-birth fatalities, and casualties in World War I.

To meet the needs of parentless children, and in some cases, children who had only one parent, several orphanages were initiated during the second decade of the twentieth century.

Among these new orphanages were the Israel Orphan Asylum and the HNOH, both were located in the tenement slums of Manhattan's Lower East Side, about six blocks from each other, on Second Street and Seventh Street respectively.

The IOA was located on 274 East Second Street in Manhattan's Lower East Side. It served the needs of Jewish boys and girls ages one to six who were orphans (and later girls who were orphans up to age 14). Many of these children were wartime orphans. In the Bible the word "Asylum" means "a safe refuge."

The mission of the IOA was three-fold:

- 1) To provide for the welfare of the orphans,
- 2) To instruct the children in "the ideals and traditions of Orthodox Jewry,"
- 3) To teach the children to be loyal Americans.

In 1917, Judge Hartman proposed that the IOA and the HNOH consolidate to form a combined organization.



*The Israel Orphan Asylum,
274 E. 2nd Street, NYC*

His offer was not accepted by the directors of the HNOH. The two orphanages continued to work cooperatively, but remained separate.

The goals of the HNOH and the IOA were quite similar and they both served the families and orphans of the Eastern European Jewish immigrant

community. In some cases they served the same families. Several of the boys in the HNOH had sisters and younger brothers in the IOA. When some of the six-year-old boys “graduated” from the IOA they moved to the HNOH.

In the summer of 1921 IOA purchased a large home in Arverne, Rockaway, New York. The conditions were so agreeable that the home was used all year round. When Judge Hartman died, his wife, May Weisser Hartman, took over and ran the institution until 1958. After Hartman's death, in 1936, a city park, which was located near the IOA, was named the Gustave Hartman Triangle, in his honor.

One of the major sources of revenue for the IOA was the All-Star Revue and Fashion Show, which was held annually in late February or early March at Madison Square Garden from 1922 to 1958. Celebrities from Hollywood and Broadway appeared in the show as well as New York City and New York State Officials. When the Madison Square Garden moved uptown, audiences of 22,000 were present as well as a radio audience who listened from home.

In addition to the celebrity entertainment, a fashion show, and dancing to a large band were included in the show. In 1944 the IOA moved to Far Rockaway and in 1950 it was renamed the Gustave Hartman Home to honor its founder and to avoid negative connotations that came with the words “orphan” and “asylum.”

The HNOH had no endowment or regular source of income. It was funded completely by donations and special events, which included graduations, bar mitzvahs, dinners, card parties, speakers and benefits provided by entertainment venues such as the theater, opera, plays, fairs and exhibitions.

One of the main sources of money was the All Star Review and Fashion Show which was held in the Madison Square Garden, which ultimately held 22,000 people in the audience. The HNOH's All Star Review was similar to the IOA's All Star Review—both All-Star Reviews had entertainers from Broadway shows, Hollywood movie stars, orchestras and the opera.

Many of New York's Governors and Mayors supported and spoke at both Reviews, encouraging members of the audience to support these worthy causes.

Harry Lucacher, in his role as Fund Raiser, Business Manager and Superintendent of the HNOH spoke several times at the Madison Square Garden All Star Review, encouraging the audience to support the orphanage.

Mr. Lucacher also spoke in English and Yiddish at the events sponsored by the HNOH Ladies' Auxiliaries of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Yonkers. The purpose of these events was always to raise funds to provide care for the boys.

Hartman-Homecrest and the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA)

In 1947, the HNOH changed its name to Homecrest. In 1956, Homecrest merged with the Gustave Hartman Home for children under the name of Hartman-Homecrest.

In early 1962 Hartman-Homecrest was consolidated into the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA) of New York and the name HNOH after 60 years, was no longer used.^{cclxxxiii} Hartman-Homecrest also ceased to exist and their responsibilities were taken over by the JCCA which relied on supervised small group residences, government grants to families, and foster parents to provide for the children's care.

Although the official merger did not happen until 1956, both orphanages had a long history of working together. Often, the HNOH and the IOA served the same families and even the same children.

Some of the staff members, worked at both orphanages during their careers, further joining the two orphan institutions. George Goldenberg, served as Superintendent at both the IOA and the HNOH.

Justice Aaron J. Levy

Tammany Hall



Tammany Hall in 1935. Courtesy of the Associated Press (AP), New York, NY.

Tammany Hall was the Democrat's powerhouse that dominated New York City's politics for over 100 years and was infamous for its blatant corruption and crooked politics. Just under the leadership of Boss Tweed (William M. Tweed), \$200M^{cclxxxiv} (\$2.4B today) was swindled from the city to take care of the Democratic party and its loyal constituents.

For example, the New York County Courthouse' construction was \$13M—nearly twice the cost of the Alaska Purchase in 1867. And it's easy to see why. A carpenter got paid \$360,751 (\$4.9M today) for a month's labor and a plasterer got \$133,187 (\$1.82M) for two days' work.^{cclxxxv}

However, while most historians paint a colorful history of Tammany Hall with narratives of political thievery, fraud, and bribery, historian Terry Golway argues that this corruption was a means to an end. “Every history of Tammany Hall is told as a true-crime novel,” he said, “[yet] the benefits that Tammany Hall brought to New York and to the United States outweigh the corruption with which it is associated...[it] was there for the poor immigrant who was otherwise friendless in New York.”^{cclxxxvi}

By the 1850s, the Great Famine in Ireland displaced more than 2M Irish citizens (25% of Ireland's population), and over 130,000 Irish immigrants ended up in New York City.^{cclxxxvii} Tammany Hall provided for these impoverished Irishmen when no one else would, showering them with gifts,

food, shelter, employment, and even citizenship, in exchange for their loyal votes.



In 1895, Boss Tweed and his fellow ring members transformed some of New York's courts into “naturalization mills” which churned out thousands of new Americans per day—as many as three naturalizations per minute. In the year prior to the 1868 election, the Democrats did more naturalizations in that single year than in the past six years combined.^{cclxxxviii} This allowed Tammany Hall to “find strength in numbers” and take control of New York City's government.

To the left, “Naturalization Mill,” by Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly, October 24, 1896.

Social Reform

At the turn of the century, advocates for charitable institutions realized the problems facing New York City due to rapid industrialization, poverty, and exploitive labor practices were far too great for charitable organizations to handle on their own and there was a push for greater government involvement through progressive laws and social reform.^{cclxxxix} Tammany Hall and Aaron Levy were at the forefront of this movement.

When the poverty-stricken Russian Jewish immigrants moved into the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the Irish and German residents moved out. The Democrats desperately needed the Jewish vote and Aaron Levy presented himself as someone who would be loyal to the Democratic party and get the Jewish votes. So he was elected to the New York State Legislature in 1908.^{ccxc}

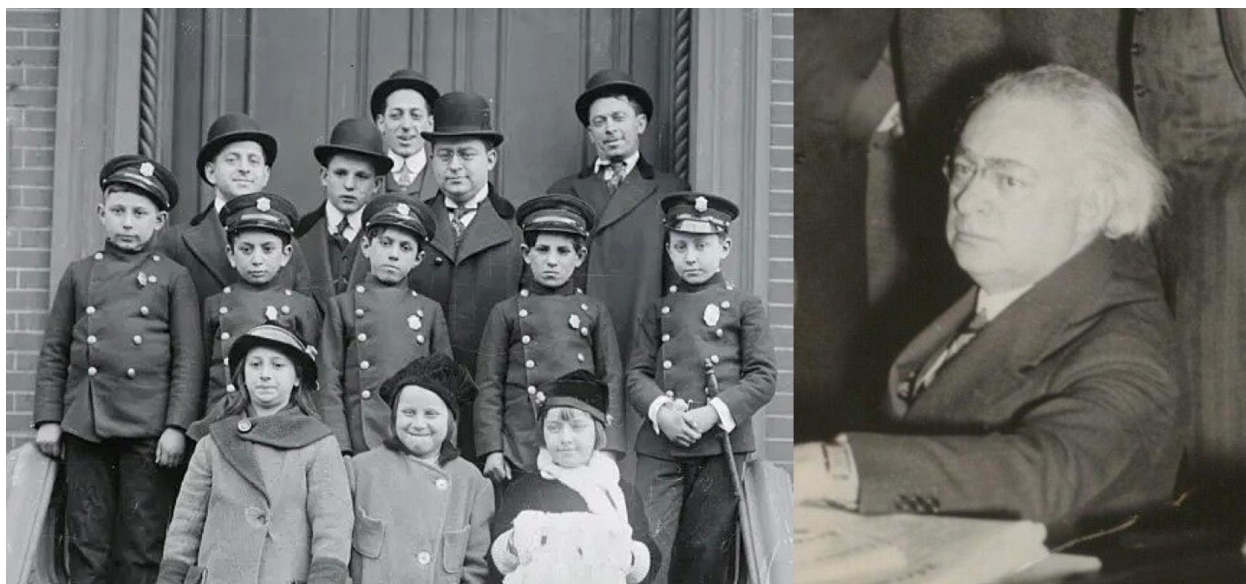
Over the next 40 years, the Irish bosses ran Aaron Levy for political office on the city, state, and then the judicial level as a Supreme Court justice in 1923, where he presided over many famous cases.^{ccxcⁱ} Thanks to his efforts, the Jews became a reliable voting block for the Democratic party.

Aaron Levy, the Humanitarian

Aaron Levy was a very active humanitarian and remained a loyal official to Tammany Hall, working within an incredibly corrupt Democratic party to accomplish his goals, championing women's rights, advocating for garment workers and factory reform, pushing for widows' pensions, and supporting various causes to benefit destitute families and children.

Aaron Levy was distrustful of his corrupt assistants and clerks, and opted to pay patronage to his son-in-law and several boyhood friends with whom he could trust. Like many Democratic officials, he was so free with his money that when questioned, could never recall where the funds came from or went to.^{ccxcⁱⁱ} Although Aaron Levy's finances came under scrutiny multiple times and his son-in-law ended up in jail, the bar group balked at criticizing the judge. Charles C. Burlingham, president of the Bar Association, declared "On all sides we see and hear of ignorance, deceit, oppression and chicanery," suggesting that if they indicted the judge, they would have to do the same of every single lawyer and justice within the corrupt political system.^{ccxcⁱⁱⁱ}

And so, Aaron Levy was allowed to continue his work, pushing through many progressive laws and reform. In 1913 alone, New York passed all sorts of factory reforms. After 146 garment workers were killed in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, Tammany Hall didn't just push for laws on sprinklers or workplace safety, they used that catastrophe as a platform to also push for other things such as unemployment compensation and the beginnings of minimum wage.^{ccxc^{iv}}



On the left, Judge Aaron J. Levy with children from the East Side Protective Association just days before Governor Whitman signed the Widowed Mother's Pension Bill on April 7, 1915. On the right, Judge Levy in 1937.

The fight for widow's pensions had also been unsuccessful for over twenty years before Levy got involved. He dressed the boys in police uniforms and the girls in women's clothing to bring attention to the Widowed Mothers' Pension Bill. Days later, Governor Whitman finally signed the bill. The following 20 years, most states followed suite, passing laws for pensions to widowed mothers. Aaron Levy also supported women's rights, served as the counsel for the Garment Makers of America,^{ccxcv} and passed the first child welfare legislation in the state.^{ccxcvi}

As President of the HNOH

Justice Levy was a close associate of Harry for many years. Like Harry, he devoted his life to raising funds for the orphans. His wife headed the group of women over the all-star entertainment at Madison Square Garden,^{ccxcvii} and he also attended fashion shows, luncheons, alumni events, concerts, confirmation dinners, birthday celebrations, and other benefits headed by numerous ladies' auxiliaries on behalf of the HNOH.^{ccxcviii}

He made at least one weekly speech to society ladies for donations for the orphanage for almost thirty years. When he couldn't attend in person, he participated in the form of letters and telegrams that were read at the events, always praising the work of the orphan home and the ladies that were often running the show. "The importance of taking care of orphans is immeasurable," he told a gather of 1,500 women.^{ccxcix} Often his speeches were part of radio broadcasts, along with musical performances and entertainment.

"In appreciation for his devotion to humanity." This appears on Justice Levy's portrait, presented by the Ladies' League in 1931, to be hung in the dining room of the Home.



The HNOH prospered during the nine years that Justice Levy was its president. During that time, extensive improvements were made including the installation of a new kitchen, new dining room, playroom, library, shower room, gymnasium, talking motion picture units, as well as building repairs and other projects entailing an expenditure of approximately \$200,000. During that time also a deficit of half a million dollars was wiped out.^{ccc}

Aaron Levy also gave the boys a good taste of politics, running the election for student body in "Chicagoesque" style, with the ballots guarded by two boys armed with cap pistols to prevent stuffing of the ballot boxes. Boys held campaigns with great fanfare, a good dose of humor, and great orations. Slogans such as *"If Better Orphans Were Raised, We'd Raise Them"* and *"I May Not Be In the Public Eye But I'm Not a Cinder,"*^{xcvi} with speeches and dinner, and official inauguration of officers occurring with Judge Levy present. The election of the boy officers were held in a manner closely approximating the regular civic elections. Candidates were nominated and have held election campaigns. Last week registrations were held and ballots were cast secretly.

The boy officers, under the supervision of the superintendent, did the actual work of operating the home. The mayor and the members of the common council have regular meetings and formulate the rules of the home. The

department of planning and sanitation has charge of keeping the property and grounds clean and neat, and the commissioner of athletics arranges the program of athletic activities. Boys who violate the rules of the home are arraigned in the municipal court, where their cases are prosecuted by the prosecuting attorney and the sentences meted out by the justice. The practice of electing officers and having them manage the home was followed for many years.^{cccii}

At a confirmation dinner with 600 “foster parents,” Supreme Court Justice Salvatore A. Cotillo, the principal speaker, referred to his days as a legislator in 1917, when he was an assemblyman from New York City. The first person he met at Albany was Supreme Court Justice Aaron J. Levy, president of the orphan home, and then an assemblyman. “Justice Levy was then sponsoring the first child welfare legislation in the state,” he said. “What Justice Levy said in abstract in 1917 he has given to us tonight in concrete form.” Three of the boys made remarks (Walter Kuperinsky, Charles Vogel, and Ira Greenberg), including a statement that “no father or mother could more conscientiously give us the safety and security which we have in this wonderful home of ours.”^{ccciii}

In 1929, two Catholic leaders (and justices) were made board of directors of the HNOH and marked a better understanding between the Hebrew and Catholic religions: Justice Victor J. Dowling (previously knighted by the Pope for his charity work) and Associate Justice John V. McAvoy (of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court). It was the first time in the history of the home that Catholics were appointed to the home’s board, which included 60 prominent citizens, judges, and professional men in the metropolitan area. Undoubtably, Aaron Levy’s strong network ensured the success of the HNOH on a national scale.^{ccciv}

Aaron Levy retired as a justice at the age of 70 in 1951 and became an official referee. The state hearings took place in the fall of 1952, and he resigned as a referee soon after. He then went to live with his son in St. Petersburg, Florida.^{cccv} On November 21, 1955, Aaron J. Levy died of a heart attack and was buried at the Mokom Sholem Cemetery in Ozone Park, Queens.^{cccv}

The Harry Lucacher Alumni Society (HLAS)

Shortly after Harry's death, a group of alumni created the short-lived Harry Lucacher Alumni Society (HLAS) in his honor. Alumnus Sam George Arcus was present at the chapter's inauguration (*emphasis added*):

“In 1939 a group of HNOH alumni (and some not yet alumni) met at a restaurant in NYC and formed THE HARRY LUCACHER ALUMNI SOCIETY, with Mrs. Ida Lucacher (the widow) and Samuel Field (the Home's new president) agreeing to serve as Honorary Presidents.

A short time later, the HNOH Alumni Association formally recognized the HLAS as an official chapter.... This in order to honor **a man who devoted his life to the rescue and care of orphaned and dependent Jewish boys**. Harry Lucacher, a caring soul, died at 54 years of age!”^{cccvi}

The HLAS published a special tribute to Harry in their publication, *H.L.A.S. Recorder*, in June 1940. Alumnus and chapter member David Schwartz composed this poem in Harry's honor:

Malice he had none, kindness supreme
A home for each orphan, his heavenly dream
Wise his decisions, always so just;
Faithful to each one who gave him their trust.

Advice always found on the tip of his tongue;
His share as a leader can't be left unsung.
A man rarely found in a search near and far;
A man of the people – a bright guiding star.

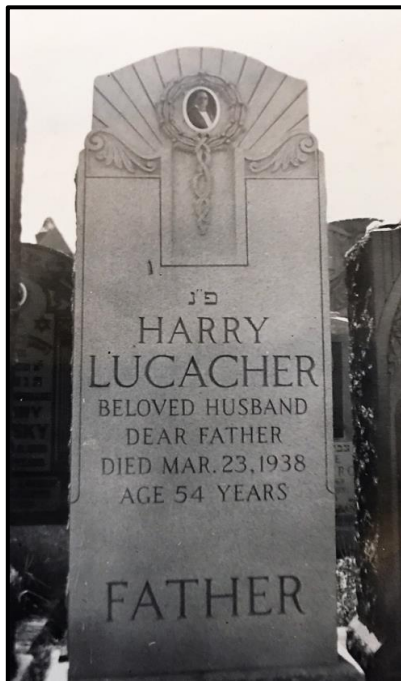
Helpful and ready, such was his blend;
To all those who knew him, always a friend.
Endeared to the orphans – Yes, one and all;
This was the man who answered the call.^{cccviii}

The HLAS was accused of trying to undermine the main organization and the group soon fell apart as the boys moved away. In the few years of its existence, the organization renovated The Home's tennis court and sponsored forums for HNOH boys interested in college.^{cccix}

Part V: Legacy

Harry's Passing

Shortly after midnight on 23 March 1938, Harry suffered a catastrophic heart attack at the Home. He died shortly after. Harry was buried at Mount Hebron Cemetery in Flushing, Queens, New York. He was buried in the section of the cemetery associated with the Kishinever Sick Benevolent Society,^{cccx} of which he was a longstanding member.^{cccxi}



Left: Harry Lucacher's headstone at Mount Hebron Cemetery in Flushing. Right: Harry's wife Ida beside the stone. Photos supplied by Howard Dolgin.

HNOH alumnus Sam George Arcus described his memories of the night Harry passed away:

On March 23, 1938, I (Sam Arcus) was 16½ going on 17, sleeping ever so soundly, when a shriek, followed by an eerie wailing, pierced the Junior dormitory—my province of responsibility as one of its monitors. The shriek and wailing emanated from the White House, the domicile of the HNOH's superintendent and his family. It was about 4 am. Later we learned that Ida Lucacher, wife of Harry, our then superintendent, had discovered her husband lying dead from a sudden massive heart attack and the shocking discovery produced her shriek and wailing.^{cccxi}

Obituaries and Funeral

Harry was memorialized in many lengthy obituaries published in the New York City area. From the Yonkers *Herald Statesman*, 23 March 1938:

*Lucacher, Orphan Home Head, Dies at 54 of Heart Attack:
Superintendent of Hebrew National on Tuckahoe Road Succumbs After
Complaining of Pains—Here Since Institution Came Two Decades Ago*

Harry Lucacher, superintendent and executive director of the Hebrew National Orphan Home of 407 Tuckahoe Road, died of heart disease early today in his room at the institution.

When Mr. Lucacher, who had been suffering from a minor heart ailment for several years, retired to his room at midnight, he told Reginald Van Thorne, night watchman at the home, that he had “stabbing pains in his heart.” Several minutes later he collapsed and succumbed before aid could be administered.

Dr. George MacPherson, who answered an ambulance call from Yonkers General Hospital, said death was due to natural causes.

Health Commissioner Eugene F. McGillian gave permission to remove the body.

Mr. Lucacher, who would have celebrated his fifty-fifth birthday May 15, was one of the founders of the home, which originally was located in St. Mark's Place, New York City. Shortly after its establishment in 1914, the institution was moved to Yonkers and Mr. Lucacher became executive director and superintendent.

Aaron J. Levy, president of the board and a Supreme Court Justice, voiced his sorrow at the sudden death of his associate of many years and lauded his devotional services to the institution.

‘Although serving the home in two official capacities, Mr. Lucacher always found time to take part in all social, athletic and miscellaneous affairs,’ said Judge Levy. ‘Whenever young residents needed advice or aid in their problems, he would gladly give assistance. Beloved by all of the boys and the home staffs, he often supervised athletic events which residents there hold frequently.

Mr. Lucacher was a member of the Independent Keshinever [*sic*] Sick Benevolent Society of New York City for many years. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Ida Gottlieb Lucacher; two daughters, Mrs. Emma Shapiro and Miss Sylvia Lucacher; a son, George, and a grandchild, Jerry Lucacher, all of the Bronx, and a [half]-sister, Mrs. Rose Sultan of Brooklyn.

Members and the Ladies' Auxiliary of the medical and dental staff of the home will attend funeral services tomorrow at 2 P. M. at Aaron's Funeral Parlor, 153 East Broadway, New York City. Rabbi Morris Sandhaus of the home will officiate. Burial will follow in Mount Hebron Cemetery.^{cccxi}

From the *New York Post*, 23 March 1938:

Harry Lucacher

Harry Lucacher, superintendent of the Hebrew National Orphan Home, died of a heart attack today in his office at the home, 407 Tuckahoe Road, Yonkers. He lived with his wife, Ida, and three children, at 1407 Davison Avenue, The Bronx.

Since its inception in 1914, Mr. Lucacher had been identified with the Hebrew home, serving as its superintendent since 1930. He was a member of the Keshniver Sick Benevolent Society and was active in various other philanthropic and social service movements.

The 400 parentless boys in the orphanage's care went into mourning after learning of his death.^{cccxiv}

Four announcements were printed in the *New York Times* the next day, on 24 March 1938. Compared to typical death announcements, these items are far more personal and express the sincere grief felt by Harry's community after his passing (*emphasis added by this author*):

LUCACHER—Harry. The Board of Trustees of the Hebrew National Orphan Home announces with **profound sorrow** the untimely death of their superintendent, Harry Lucacher. Officers and members are requested to attend the funeral services on Thursday, March 24, at 2 P. M., at Gutterman's Funeral Chapel, 153 East Broadway. Interment Mount Hebron Cemetery. AARON J. LEVY, President.

LUCACHER—Harry. With inexpressible sorrow and regret we mourn the sudden death of our endeared friend and able executive, Harry Lucacher. May he find eternal rest after **a life rich in devotion and service to helpless, parentless and destitute children**. OFFICE STAFF, HEBREW NATIONAL ORPHAN HOME.

LUCACHER—The Ladies League of the Hebrew National Orphans Home learns with deep sorrow of the untimely death of the superintendent of the home, **Harry Lucacher, who was loved by every**

boy there, and wishes to express to his family its deep sympathy in our mutual loss. KITTY ROSENHOLZ, President.

LUCACHER—Harry, **beloved father and guardian to hundreds of orphans**. We mourn our loss. ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF HEBREW NATIONAL ORPHAN HOME.^{cccxv}

A second item appeared in the Yonkers *Herald Statesman*, 24 March 1938:

Eulogized

Twenty-four years of service and leadership in the Hebrew National Orphan Home were eulogized by Supreme Court Justice Aaron J. Levy, president of the home, at funeral services this afternoon for Harry Lucacher, fifty-four, superintendent of the institution, who died suddenly yesterday.

Rabbi Harry Halpern of the East Midwood Jewish Center, Brooklyn, and Rabbi Morris Sandhaus of the orphanage, conducted the services at the Gutterman Funeral Chapel, 153 East Broadway, New York City. Burial was in Mount Hebron Cemetery, Flushing.^{cccxvi}

Lewis Zedicoff wrote an account of the funeral for the June 1938 edition of the Home's monthly newspaper, *The Homelite* [*all misspellings in the below passage are consistent with the source text*]:

Hundreds Mourn Harry Lucacher: Boys Act as Pallbearers

As hundreds from all walks of life overflowed the Gutterman Funeral Chapel to pay their last respects and as two hundred boys of the Home acted as honorary pallbearers, a most touching but simple service was conducted for Harry Lucacher, superintendent of the Home he served for the past quarter of a century and an entire lifetime spent in charitable work. After the services his remains were buried in the Mount Hebron Cemetery

in Flushing. Mr. Lucacher died suddenly from a heart attack in his fifty-fourth year, on Wednesday morning, March 23, 1938 at the Home.

Herbert Immerblum, sixteen year-old [sic] resident of the institution, in attempting to speak at the funeral in behalf of the boys became so overcome with grief that he was unable to carry on. Rabbi Morris Sandhaus, spiritual leader of the Home, and Rabbi Harry Halpern of the East Midwood Jewish Center of Brooklyn conducted the impressive services, which were characteristic of the role Harry Lucacher played through life.

Most of those present were unable to control themselves and wept bitterly while the hundreds of mourners, most of them prominent charitable workers stood in tributary homage. Justice Aaron J. Levy, president of the institution, attended but could not speak owing to his depressed feelings. Mr. Lucacher was in Judge Levy's company up to three hours prior to his passing away.

Prior to his untimely death, Mr. Lucacher had been warned by doctors to discontinue his work because of his failing health. However, seeing the importance of his work for the upkeep and maintenance of the institution he carried on. Two years ago he was involved in an auto accident, which disabled him for some time, but he rose from the sickbed to resume his activities for the Home.

When news of Mr. Lucacher's passing reached the boys they folded into cliques and spoke in low murmurs as though each and every one of them had lost a personal and devoted friend. For two days boys remained home from school, and in front of the Home the flag was placed at half-mast in a silent tribute.

Irony also played its part with his passing. On May the 15th, Mr. Lucacher was to celebrate his fifty-fifth birthday with the birthday boys

of April and May, which was sponsored by the Yonkers Ladies Auxiliary. Also, it was the first time that money was not donated by the boys and members of the staff for his annual birthday party. Mr. Lucacher is survived by his wife, Ida, son, George, and two daughters, Emma and Sylvia.^{cccxvii}



Above, Harry after recovering from an automobile incident.

The *New York Times* published its own obituary and account of Harry's funeral on 25 March 1938:

*1,000 AT LUCACHER RITES:
Leaders in Charity at Service for Orphanage Head*

More than 1,000 persons, including many prominent in charitable work, attended funeral services yesterday for Harry Lucacher, superintendent of the Hebrew National Orphan Home, in the funeral chapel at 153 East Broadway. Mr. Lucacher died Wednesday.

Two hundred boys from the orphanage served as honorary pallbearers. One of them, Herbert Immerblum, attempted to deliver a eulogy, but was so overcome with grief that he was unable to continue. Rabbi Harry Halpern of the East Midwood Jewish Center, Brooklyn, and Rabbi Morris Sandhaus of the orphanage conducted the services.

Supreme Court Justice Aaron J. Levy, president of the institution, praised Mr. Lucacher for his work since 1914 as an active head of the home.^{cccxviii}

The *Herald Statesman* published an additional follow-up on 25 March 1938:

Grief Halts Lad's Eulogy at Rites

Herbert Immerblum, fifteen-year-old resident of the Hebrew National Orphan Home, attempted to deliver a eulogy at funeral services yesterday for Harry Lucacher, superintendent of the institution, but was overcome by grief and could not continue. The rites were conducted by Rabbi Morris Sandhaus of the orphanage and Rabbi Harry Halpern of the East Midwood Jewish Center, Brooklyn, at a funeral chapel at 153 East Broadway, New York City. Burial took place in Mount Hebron Cemetery, Flushing.

More than 1,000 persons, including many prominent in charitable work attended the services. Two hundred boys from the orphanage served as honorary pallbearers. Supreme Court Justice Aaron J. Levy, president of the home, delivered the eulogy.^{cccxix}

The HNOH also held a ceremony to plant a tree in Harry's honor, as recalled by Sam George Arcus:

Another mental image... remains fixed in my mind, as well as my photo album. There is a ceremony at the front of the HNOH involving the planting of a tree in memory of Harry Lucacher recently suddenly deceased from a massive heart attack. An older boy, Henry Roman, stands to the side of the tree, having just dug the hole for its planting and Rabbi Morris Sandhaus, hat on head and right hand outstretched is eulogizing our beloved, fallen “foster” father.

Behind him and the tree is a portrait of Mr. Lucacher, drawn by me and posted on the building. The tree was purchased with the pennies, nickels and dimes contributed by the boys of the Home.^{cccx}

Ida Lucacher's Passing

Harry's wife Ida Lucacher lived almost forty years following her husband's death. She passed away on 21 October 1977.^{ccxxi} She was buried at Mount Hebron Cemetery in Flushing.



Ida (Gottlieb) Lucacher's headstone at Mount Hebron Cemetery. Photo supplied by Howard Dolgin.

Harry's Legacy

Although Harry died suddenly, his profound impact was not soon forgotten. He left a legacy of humanity, generosity, and service to the Jewish community.

An unsigned letter, written in 1937 prior to his death, describes in detail the role Harry played in the orphans' lives. It was addressed to the editor of the Home's monthly newspaper, *The Homelite*:

Dear Editor:

Sociologists write that a child can never really be happy in an orphan home. Here is one orphan home where this can be proven to be a complete fallacy. The Hebrew National Orphan Home of Yonkers, NY., which has 400 boys in its care, is the nearest to a Utopia orphan home. If Charles Dickens, the great reformer of the 19th century were alive today and studied the lives of these parentless children he certainly could never have found the inspiration and conception for a story like the immortal 'OLIVER TWIST.'

This great accomplishment was achieved by one person, Mr. Harry Lucacher, the institution's present Superintendent and business manager for over a quarter of a century. For twenty years this man awaited the opportunity to become closer to these children and to realize a lifetime ideal of making parentless children as happy in an institution of this category, as in a private home.

Today, seven years later, Mr. Harry Lucacher has realized that great and difficult task of making these orphans as happy as any child who has both parents and lives in a private home. The sufferings, hardships and sacrifices this man has experienced and

offered are too numerous to include in this letter. He enveloped his entire being into this noble task even to the extent of neglecting his own children, family and friends at times.

The orphans of this institution repeatedly have attempted to show their gratitude to Mr. Harry Lucacher, who is their benefactor, father, mother, guide and mentor all in one. In the eyes of a charitable and humanistic world he has won the love, respect, honor and admiration not only of all boys in the Home and its Alumni, but also all those that come in contact with him in his daily tasks.^{cccxxii}

Several other residents wrote fondly about Harry's time as superintendent in later years as well (*emphasis added, all typographical errors consistent with original text*):

“Of the seven or eight Superintendents of the HNOH throughout its almost 50 year history, undoubtedly the two most **memorable and outstanding** were Harry Lucacher and Reuben Koftoff.... When the circumstances (of which I'm not familiar) dictated that Harry Lucacher take over the reigns of Superintendent from George Goldenberg, **the lives of all of us children were, of course, directly affected—increasingly for the better.**” – *Sam George Arcus*^{cccxxiii}

“I'm not sure what events compelled Harry Lucacher to abandon his business management and fund-raising roles to take over as the HNOH superintendent in 1930, succeeding Mr. George Goldenberg. But his assuming that responsibility had a significant impact on those of us who were in the HOME at the time.

While not immediately, there was a gradual lessening of the regimentation and disciplining so common at the time. For which **we kids were grateful.**” – *Sam George Arcus*^{cccxxiv}

While not a professionally trained childcare worker... Harry Lucacher brought to his superintendent job an uncanny and intuitive application that captured the hearts and minds of most of his charges. – *Sam George Arcus*^{cccxxv}

“My days and nights in 1929 and 1930 were a nightmare, for it was during the days of the Great Depression.... I was jobless and homeless. And one day, while walking in a daze along 42nd Street, someone who was also an alumnus of the Home called to me. I was so disoriented at the time that I couldn’t even remember the person’s name. But, noting my ragged clothing and haggard look, said to me, in effect that I should go to the Home’s address at its NYC office.... I went back to 407 Tuckahoe Road and there **Mr. Lucacher agreed to employ me** as a supervisor and athletic director, at least until the storm—which was the Depression—blew over. He gave me a job paying \$20 a month, but added: ‘when I have it.’ ... **If he never gave me a dime, it wouldn’t have mattered. I felt like a ‘somebody’ again.** I had a job and a nice warm place I could again call ‘Home.’”

Manny Bergman, one of the alumni boys, once expressed **how grateful he had always been to Mr. Lucacher for creating the direction of his life.** When Manny was 16, Mr. Lucacher asked his son [*George Lucacher*] to teach Manny to drive a car. These lessons went on for some time, and eventually Manny obtained his driver’s license and later became the official driver for The Home, picking up food donations from all over New York City, especially days-old bread and cakes. Many years later, Manny blossomed into a certified automobile instructor and had a happy career as a teacher.^{cccxxvi}

Being exposed to this man and having the good fortune of having had him as my mentor is very precious to me. **Because of him, my life turned around.** Because of him, I stopped thinking in selfish terms. Because of him, I eased into the field

of institutional child care and teaching. I feel that I am indebted to him, for if it had not been for him and Miss Fiance [the HNOH Social Worker], who knows what would have happened to me. He will always have a special place in my heart, serving as a reminder that goodness in people is not always interred with their bones. – *Charles “Chick” Baker*^{ccxxvii}

Endnotes

ⁱ Harry consistently reported that he was born in May 1883, however the exact date varied between the 15th and 20th. See respectively, World War I Draft Registration, Harry Lucacher, serial no. 1707, Draft Board 8, Bronx, New York; citing FHL microfilm 1,753,943. Also, New York, Southern District Court, petitions for naturalization, vol. 151, p. 218, 6 August 1906, Harry Lucacher.

ⁱⁱ New York City, Manhattan marriage certificate no. 21487 (1906), Lucacher-Gottlieb; Municipal Archives, New York City.

ⁱⁱⁱ Yonkers, Westchester, New York, death certificate no. 281 (1938), Harry Lucacher; Local Registrar, Yonkers.

^{iv} Ibid. Also, Mount Hebron Cemetery (Flushing, Queens, New York), gravestone photograph, Harry Lucacher (d. 1938).

^v New York City, Manhattan marriage certificate no. 21487 (1906), Lucacher-Gottlieb; Municipal Archives, New York City.

^{vi} Gravestone photograph, Ida Lucacher (1887-1977), grave 17, line 12, sec. J/K, ref. 10, block 28, Mount Hebron Cemetery (Flushing, New York); supplied by client.

^{vii} For example, on a family list (census record) from Lithuania in 1887, Ida was listed as age 3 [b. 1884]. Ida reported that she was 20 [b. 1886] at the time of her marriage in 1906. Her age when she immigrated to the United States (15 in January 1900) suggests a birth year of 1885 or 1886. See, Pumpenai, Panevezys, Kaunas [Kovno], Lithuania, family list, p. 186, registration 486, Arie Gotlib household; I-215/1/4, Kaunas Regional State Archives; consulted as database, “The All Lithuania Revision List Database – Part 1,” *LitvakSIG* (<https://www.litvaksig.org> : accessed 27 March 2019). Also, New York City, Manhattan marriage certificate no. 21487 (1906), Lucacher-Gottlieb; Municipal Archives, New York City. Also, Passenger manifest, S.S. *Lake Ontario*, England to Canada, 1 March 1900 (arrival), p. 7, line 1, Aron Gottlieb; citing microfilm roll T-504, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

^{viii} Pumpenai, Panevezys, Kaunas [Kovno], Lithuania, family list, p. 186, registration 486, Arie Gotlib household; I-215/1/4, Kaunas Regional State Archives; consulted as database, “The All Lithuania Revision List Database – Part 1,” *LitvakSIG* (<https://www.litvaksig.org> : accessed 27 March 2019).

^{ix} Rose reported several birthdates for herself, both in the month of June in the years 1887 and 1888. When Rose applied for Social Security, she reported that she was born on 7 June 1887 to Borris [*sic*] Rabinowitz and Ann Goldberg [*sic*]. When Rose applied for a U.S. passport, she reported that she was born on 15 June 1888. See respectively, Social Security Administration, SS-5 Application for Social Security, Social Security no. 553-28-3161, Rose Rabinowitz Sultan; database, “U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007,” *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 28 March 2019). Also, United States Passport Application, Hillsborough County, Florida, no. 197787 (penned), no. 7021 (stamped), 22 May 1913, Rose Sultan; NARA microfilm publication 1490, roll 185.

^x Ibid.

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- ^{xi} Daughters of Chana Rabinowitz referenced in Adam Katz' will; reported by both Staub [descendant of Rose Sultan] and Robbins families. Gravestone with engraved patronymic for Tsilah located in Holon Cemetery, Tel Aviv, Israel.
- ^{xii} Daughters of Chana Rabinowitz referenced in Adam Katz' will as living in Cahul as of 1923; the daughters of Chana, Celia [Tsilah] and Chava [Eva] were known to descendants of Rose Sultan [Staub family] and Sam Robbins.
- ^{xiii} Alexander Beider, *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*, 2 vols. (Bergenfield, New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2008).
- ^{xiv} Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust*, 3 vols. (New York: New York University Press, 2001), v. 2.
- ^{xv} Florida, U.S. District Court, Southern District, Tampa, petitions for naturalization, vol. 3, p. 38, no. 188, 19 July 1911, Harry Sultan. Harry's wife Rosa's [sic] birthplace was given as Cagul, Russia.
- ^{xvi} Florida, U.S. District Court, Southern District, Tampa, petitions for naturalization, vol. 8, p. 82, no. 1032, [n.d.] June 1922, Adam Katz. Also, Adam bequeathed assets to his sister "Hannah Rabinowitz, who at present resides at or near Kahul Roumania..." Harry's uncle Samuel's survivors included his sister "Ida" Rabinovitch of Kovel, Roumania [sic]. See respectively, Hillsborough County, Florida, Local Wills, vol. I, p. 134, Adam Katz. Also, New York County, New York, Surrogate's Court, petition for letters of administration, 14 September 1925, no. A-3475-1925, Solomon Goldenberg Also Known As Samuel Goldenberg.
- ^{xvii} Clara Jignea, Yakov Kopansky, and Semion Shoikhet, "The Jews of Moldova," in *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories*, ed. Miriam Weiner (New York: Miriam Weiner-Roots to Routes Foundation, 1999), 395.
- ^{xviii} Raphael Vago et al., *The History of the Jews in Romania*, 4 vols. (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, 2005), 2:179.
- ^{xix} 1910 United States Federal Census Year: 1910; Census Place: Manhattan Ward 12, New York, New York; Roll: T624_1017; Page: 4A; Enumeration District: 0393; FHL microfilm: 1375030
- ^{xx} 1900 United States Federal Census Year: 1900; Census Place: Tampa, Hillsborough, Florida; Page: 28; Enumeration District: 0069; FHL microfilm: 1240170
- ^{xxi} 1900 U.S. census, Hillsborough County, Florida, population schedule, City of Tampa, ward 4, enumeration district (ED) 69, sheet 28A, dwelling 522, family 526, Henry [sic] Lucacher and Adam Katz living as boarders; FHL microfilm 1,240,170. Consistent with, Morris Slater, "Alumnus Reviews Life of Harry Lucacher," *H.L.A.S. Recorder*, 23 June 1938, p. 4; reprinted from *Yonkers Daily Times* (Yonkers, New York), 29 March 1938, n.p. Harry's occupation is only "clerk" in the census, but "clerk in a hotel" in Slater's article. Much of Slater's article is inaccurate, so only Harry's title ("clerk") is certain.
- ^{xxii} Ibid.
- ^{xxiii} *The Tampa City Directory: 1903* (Columbus, Ohio: Wiggins Directories Pub. Co., 1903), 276.
- ^{xxiv} Florida, U.S. District Court, Southern District, Tampa, petitions for naturalization, vol. 8, p. 82, no. 1032, [n.d.] June 1922, Adam Katz.
- ^{xxv} New York City, Manhattan marriage certificate no. 7696 (1902), Adam Katz-Regana [sic] Gottesman; Municipal Archives, New York City.
- ^{xxvi} New York City, Manhattan death certificate no. 21783 (1925), Samuel Goldenberg; Municipal Archives, New York City. Parents Isaac [Goldenberg] and Yetta Cohen. New York City, Brooklyn death certificate no. 8718, Abraham Goldenberg; Municipal Archives, New York City. Parents Isaac Aaron Goldenberg and Yenta Goldenberg. On the record of Abraham's second marriage, he gave his mother's maiden name as "Haskowitz," similar to his first wife's maiden name "Hershkowitz"; this coincidence suggests clerical error as the two fields are close together. See, New York City, Manhattan marriage license no. 9457 (1914), Goldenberg-Auerbach; Municipal Archives, New York City. Harry's maternal aunt Ida (Goldenberg) Wilderman's death certificate listed her parents as Ozias Goldenberg and "Yetta Unknown." See, Florida State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificate, state file no. 18034, registrar's no. 2810, 6 September 1946, Ida Wilderman.

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- ^{xxvii} Florida, U.S. District Court, Southern District, Tampa, petitions for naturalization, vol. 8, p. 82, no. 1032, [n.d.] June 1922, Adam Katz.
- ^{xxviii} Susan Greenbaum, *More Than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa, Florida 1886-2006* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002).
- ^{xxix} Ibid.
- ^{xxx} D.D. Moore et al., editors, *Men of the South: A Work for the Newspaper Reference Library* (New Orleans: Southern Biographical Association, 1922), 298.
- ^{xxxi} “Adam Katz, Successful Roumanian-American,” *The Tampa Times* (Tampa, Florida), 7 August 1919, p. 2.
- ^{xxxii} Rachel B. Heimovics and Marcia Zerivitz, *Florida Jewish Heritage Trail* (Florida: Florida Department of State, 2000), 25. This mistakenly notes that Adam Katz established his store in 1892; it was actually established several years later (see note 35).
- ^{xxxiii} “Adam Katz, Successful Roumanian-American,” *The Tampa Times*. Also, “Southern States,” in, *The Bankers Magazine: Rhodes Journal of Banking and the Bankers’ Magazine Consolidated*, vol. 79 (July-December 1909) (New York: The Bankers Publishing Co., 1909), p. 654.
- ^{xxxiv} “Adam Katz, Successful Roumanian-American,” *The Tampa Times* (Tampa, Florida), 7 August 1919, p. 2.
- ^{xxxv} New York City, Manhattan marriage certificate no. 7696 (1902), Katz-Gottesman; Municipal Archives, New York City.
- ^{xxxvi} Harry was not located in the New York State Census for 1905, which suggests that he may have lived in Florida up or including part of that year.
- ^{xxxvii} New York, Southern District Court, petitions for naturalization, vol. 151, p. 218, 6 August 1906, Harry Lucacher.
- ^{xxxviii} New York, State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1794-1943. Harry Lucacher, August 6, 1906
- ^{xxxix} Abraham Soffen, the New York, U.S., State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1794-1943 June 25, 1906
- ^{xl} Samuel Soffen. New York, U.S., State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1794-1943 July 30, 1902
- ^{xli} Federation of Bessarabian Jews in America. March, 2012 by Gloria Green, Independence / Winter Garden, FL
- ^{xlii} New York City, Manhattan marriage certificate no. 21487 (1906), Lucacher-Gottlieb; Municipal Archives, New York City. Also Harry Lucacher New York, New York, Extracted Marriage Index, 1866-1937. August 13, 1906
- ^{xliii} Pumpenai, Panevezys, Kaunas [Kovno], Lithuania, family list, p. 186, registration 486, Arie Gotlib household; I-215/1/4, Kaunas Regional State Archives; consulted as database, “The All Lithuania Revision List Database – Part 1,” *LitvakSIG* (<https://www.litvaksig.org> : accessed 28 March 2019).
- ^{xliv} Passenger manifest, S.S. *Lake Ontario*, England to Canada, 1 March 1900 (arrival), p. 7, line 1, Aron Gottlieb; citing microfilm roll T-504, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.
- ^{xlv} List or Manifest of Alien Immigrants, S.S. *Lake Ontario*, Liverpool, England, to St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, 1 March 1900 (arrival), line 8, Aron Gottlieb; citing NARA microfilm publication M1464, roll 5.
- ^{xlvi} New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan, 27 Henry Street; database, *Buildings Information* (<https://dob.nyc.gov> : accessed 28 March 2019). The site of 33 Forsyth Street is currently a road and park.
- ^{xlvi} Henrietta Szold, editor, *The American Jewish Year Book 5668: September 9, 1907, to September 25, 1908* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1907), 278.
- ^{xlvi} 1910 U.S. census, New York County, New York, population schedule, New York City, Manhattan, enumeration district (ED) 393, p. 182 (stamped), sheet 4A, dwelling 146, family 64, Harry Lucacher.
- ^{xliv} New York City Department of Health, birth index, 1910, alphabetical by surname, Nohama Lucacher, 23 June.
- ⁱ Ibid. Relationships confirmed with the client.
- ⁱⁱ Sylvia Miriam Lucacher Dolgin, personal conversation.

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- ^{lii} Kishinever Sick and Benevolent Society, American Jewish Historical Society. 1903-1955
- ^{liii} Federation of Bessarabian Jews in America. March, 2012 by Gloria Green, Independence / Winter Garden, FL
- ^{liv} Jacqueline Bernard, *The Children You Gave Us: A History of 150 Years of Service to Children* (New York: Jewish Child Care Association of New York, 1973), 58.
- ^{lv} 1915 New York State census, Bronx County, New York City, Bronx, assembly district 32, election district 29, p. 40 (penned), 511 Union Avenue, Harry Lukoscher [sic] household; citing New York State Census for 1915, New York State Archives, Albany.
- ^{lvi} 1915 New York State census, Bronx County, New York City, Bronx, assembly district 32, election district 29, p. 41 (penned), 511 Union Avenue, Isaac Meltzner household; citing New York State Census for 1915, New York State Archives, Albany.
- ^{lvii} New York City, Bronx marriage certificate no. 668 (1914), Isaac Meltsner-Evalyn Gottlieb; Municipal Archives, New York City. Eva (as Evalyn) was the daughter of Aaron Gottlieb and Jennie Krauss. “Jennie” was a popular Americanization of “Shayna” among Jewish immigrants to the United States. “Krauss” is phonetically similar to Shayne’s maiden name Krawitz and does not pose a significant conflict.
- ^{lviii} 1915 New York State census, New York City, Bronx, AD 32, ED 29, p. 41 (penned), 511 Union Avenue, Isaac Meltzner household.
- ^{lix} New York City Department of Health, birth index, 1917, alphabetical by surname, Sylvia M. Lucacher, 2 January.
- ^{lx} Dolgin, Howard. “Re: 03/29/2023 Update.” Received by Vickie Ito, 8 Apr. 2023. Email correspondence.
- ^{lxi} Ira A. Greenberg with Richard G. Safran and Sam George Arcus, editors, *The Hebrew National Orphan Home: Memories of Orphanage Life* (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 2001), 4.
- ^{lxii} Slater, “Alumnus Reviews Life of Harry Lucacher,” *H.L.A.S. Recorder*, 23 June 1938, p. 4.
- ^{lxiii} Greenberg, Safran, and Arcus, eds., *The Hebrew National Orphan Home*, 4-5.
- ^{lxiv} Arcus, S.G. “Part 1 Introduction: Our Asylum – Growing Up In HNOH.” *The Hebrew National Orphan Home: Memories of Orphanage Life*. Edited by Ira A. Greenburg, with Richard G. Safran and Sam George Arcus. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc, 2001.
- ^{lxv} “Dedicate Play Room at H.N.O.H.” *The Yonkers Herald*. 23 January 1928. Newspaper Article.
- ^{lxvi} “Hebrew Orphan Home Benefit.” *The Yonkers Herald*. 11 December 1923. Newspaper Article.
- ^{lxvii} 1923 dollars in 1924 | Inflation Calculator.” Official Inflation Data, Alioth Finance, 16 Apr. 2023, <https://www.officialdata.org/1923-dollars-in-1924>.
- ^{lxviii} “Seek Funds For Orphanage.” *The Yonker’s Herald*. 24 February 1932. Newspaper article.
- ^{lxix} “Hebrew National Orphan Home Membership Campaign Opens.” *The Yonkers Herald*. 21 May 1928. Newspaper Article.
- ^{lxx} For relationship, see, New York City, Manhattan marriage license no. 9457 (1914), Goldenberg-Auerbach; Municipal Archives, New York City.
- ^{lxxi} “New Corporations Formed,” *New York Herald*, 19 December 1914, p. 18, col. 6.
- ^{lxxii} “Municipal Court Jury Cases Set for Friday,” *The Brooklyn Standard Union*, 11 June 1924, p. 5, col. 1. Case tried in the Sixth District.
- ^{lxxiii} Edgar J. Lauer, *A Supplement to the New Practice and Procedure in the Municipal Court of the City of New York under the Municipal Court Code (Laws of 1915, Chapter 279)* (New York: Baker, Voorhis & Co., 1922), 13-14.
- ^{lxxiv} 1920 U.S. census, Bronx County, New York, population schedule, New York City, Bronx, enumeration district (ED) 196, p. 75 (stamped), sheet 10-A, dwelling 70, family 186, Harry Lucacher; NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1134. The Meltsner family is the next family down (187). Also, R. L. Polk & Co.’s *Trow General Directory of New York City Embracing the Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx 1920-1921* (New York: R. L. Polk & Co. Inc., 1920), 1160. Listed as Harry Lucacheo, 509 Union, with no occupation printed. He was not listed in 1921, but reappeared in the 1922 edition. See, R. L. Polk... 1921-1922 (New York: R. L. Polk & Co. Inc, 1921), 1160 [no entry]. Harry moved to Bryant Avenue

by about 1922. See, R. L. Polk... 1922-1923 (New York: R. L. Polk & Co., Inc., 1922), 1149. His occupation was "clk" [clerk].

lxxv 1915 New York State census, Bronx County, New York City, Bronx, assembly district 32, election district 29, p. 40 (penned), 511 Union Avenue, Harry Lukoscher [sic] household; citing New York State Census for 1915, New York State Archives, Albany. Also, 1920 U.S. census, Bronx County, New York, population schedule, New York City, Bronx, enumeration district (ED) 196, p. 75 (stamped), sheet 10-A, dwelling 70, family 186, Harry Lucacher; NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1134. In 1922, Harry's occupation changed to "clerk," which could have been in the garment industry or at the HNOH. See, R. L. Polk... 1922-1923 (New York: R. L. Polk & Co., Inc., 1922), 1149. By 1925, Harry's occupation changed to "Manager." See, 1925 New York State Census, Bronx County, New York City, Bronx, assembly district 5, election district 20, p. 1 (penned), 1060 Bryant Ave, Harry Lucacher; citing New York State Census for 1925, New York State Archives, Albany.

lxxvi R. L. Polk... 1922-1923 (New York: R. L. Polk & Co., Inc., 1922), 1149.

lxxvii Ibid.

lxxviii "Nepperhan," *The Yonkers Stateman*, 27 June 1925, p. 5, col. 2. Also, Slater, "Alumnus Reviews Life of Harry Lucacher," *H.L.A.S. Recorder*, 23 June 1938, p. 4. Slater's article's dates are slightly off from the actual course of events.

lxxix 1915 New York State census, Bronx County, New York City, Bronx, assembly district 32, election district 29, p. 40 (penned), 511 Union Avenue, Harry Lukoscher [sic] household; citing New York State Census for 1915, New York State Archives, Albany. Also, 1920 U.S. census, Bronx County, New York, population schedule, New York City, Bronx, enumeration district (ED) 196, p. 75 (stamped), sheet 10-A, dwelling 70, family 186, Harry Lucacher; NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1134. In 1922, Harry's occupation changed to "clerk," which could have been in the garment industry or at the HNOH. See, R. L. Polk... 1922-1923 (New York: R. L. Polk & Co., Inc., 1922), 1149. By 1925, Harry's occupation changed to "Manager." See, 1925 New York State Census, Bronx County, New York City, Bronx, assembly district 5, election district 20, p. 1 (penned), 1060 Bryant Ave, Harry Lucacher; citing New York State Census for 1925, New York State Archives, Albany.

lxxx Ibid.

lxxxi Levinson, Ernest. "Part 4 Precipitating Factors And The Dark Side – The Good, The Bad, And The Very Bad." *The Hebrew National Orphan Home: Memories of Orphanage Life*. Edited by Ira A. Greenburg, with Richard G. Safran and Sam George Arcus. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc, 2001.

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